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ABSTRACT

In 1986, the Keep Youth in School Project, a joint venture of the Catholic University of America, the Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C., the District of Columbia Department of Human Services, and the Marriott Corporation, began a 3-year research and demonstration program to develop a practice model for helping minority foster children between the ages of 12 and 15 who were at high risk of dropping out. Specific objectives of the project were to help the youth attend school regularly, improve their academic performance, enhance work skills, and form positive attitudes toward school, work, and self. Project strategies included peer mentorship (involving Catholic University students with at risk youth); an employment training and incentive program; involvement of primary caretakers; and social support. Project findings, based on data collected from 87 students through surveys, tests, observations, personal interviews, and analysis of grades, showed significant gains in grades and attendance. A 51-item bibliography is included, and evaluative instruments are appended. (TE)

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KEEP YOUTH IN SCHOOL

A COMMUNITY BASED PRACTICE MODEL TO KEEP AT RISK YOUTH IN SCHOOL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 1986, funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration of Children, Families and Youths, Office of Human Development Services, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Keep Youth in School project began its three year research and demonstration program. The purpose of this project is to develop a practice model that can be replicated in other urban communities which wish to help youth, who are between the ages 12 and 15, and who are at risk of dropping out of school to complete their high school education. This project, a joint venture of the National Catholic School of Social Service of the Catholic University of America, the Family and Child Services of Washington, D. C., the District of Columbia Department of Human Services and the Marriott Corporation, combines public and private sector resources in a concerted effort on behalf of the most disadvantaged youth in an urban community where the school dropout rate is extremely high.

In the District of Columbia, there are currently more than 2000 children in foster care. These youth often experience many of the barriers to school success, such as frequent absences, numerous changes of school, friends and relatives not oriented to school, and inadequate parental involvement.

Goals and Objectives

Based at the Catholic University of America, the Keep Youth in School project is designed to prevent today's at risk foster youth from becoming tomorrow's dependent adults. The project's goal is to keep youth participants in school. The specific objectives are to help the youth attend school regularly, improve their academic performance, enhance work skills, and form positive attitudes toward school, work and self. All project programming aims to assist the youth in embarking on a journey towards self-realization and independent living.

The Program

Peer Mentorship

The first strategy used to reach project objectives is Peer Mentorship, in which Catholic University undergraduate students are recruited to act as peer mentors to one or two foster youth. The mentors befriend, tutor and counsel their youth with the goal of motivating them to stay in school. The specific duties of peer mentors are helping youth with homework; monitoring school progress; making appropriate recommendations to social workers and primary caretakers; advocating for youth at their schools, and exposing the youth to a variety of social, educational and cultural activities.

From October 1986 to September 1989 there have been more than 100 undergraduates involved in the project. During project year one and two, there was a high turnover of peer mentors. Most of

the peer mentors lasted one semester to one year. However, there was a significant change in project year three. At the end of third year, there were 42 peer mentors actively involved in the project. Six of them left the project because of graduation. The rest (36) wanted to continue working in the project for another year. This change was primarily due to staff experience in selecting peer mentors, providing structure and guidance to the mentors through close supervision, and offering training and staff backup services. In addition, mutual support was promoted through formation of small groups and social gatherings and the mentors were increasingly involved in planning and implementation of the incentive program activities. Finally, recognition of peer mentors for their outstanding achievements were a regular feature of the bimonthly project newsletters.

Employment Training and Incentive Program

The second project strategy is the employment and incentive program. The Community Employment Training Division of the Marriott Corporation plays an important role in this program component. Employment training and opportunities are assured to all project participants as soon as they reach age 16, as long as they remain in school. The youth are initially placed in entry level positions near their homes within Marriott Corporation's restaurant division in various Roy Rogers, Hot Shoppes, and Bob's Big Boy restaurants.

During the years 1986 to 1989, 44 youths turned age 16. Nineteen (43%) of the 44 youths chose not to participate in project employment program with the Marriott Corporation. Twenty

five (57%) of them attended employment interviews and all were offered jobs. However, six (24%) of the 25 youths never started to work after being hired. Three (16%) worked a month or less, six (24%) worked one month to six months, three (12%) worked for six months, and six (24%), all female, worked 6 months or longer. The reason frequently cited by youth who either prematurely quit their jobs or refused to participate in the project employment program, is that they perceive restaurant jobs as demeaning. However, at least seven of the youths who worked for an extended period of time have since moved to different occupations and better paid jobs, and three of them graduated from high school. Their experience with Marriott was cited as invaluable in terms of understanding of the world of work, developing vocational skills, and changing attitudes towards work and education. Of the youths who did not wish to participate in the Marriott program, six obtained other entry level positions either by themselves or through assistance given by their schools.

For youths under age 16, an incentive program was developed through the initial joint efforts of the project staff and Marriott executives. The program includes educational guest speakers and group activities such as camping and mountain climbing trips, talent and sports contests. A newsletter entitled "Youth Today" is produced several times a year to give recognition to youth who are doing well in school and who participate in extracurricular activities. Finally, an awards ceremony is held twice a year, at the end of first semester and during the summer when school is over, to recognize academic

achievements, and interest in the project. Through peer mentors' contacts on campus, student fraternity, dorm and social clubs have volunteered to host receptions, concerts, outdoor and cultural activities for project youth during the project years.

Involvement of Primary Caretakers

The third project strategy concerns the involvement of the youths' primary caretakers--their foster parents, group home counselors, relatives or biological parents. Primary caretakers were invited to group meetings as well as to incentive program activities throughout the course of the project. However, the attendance was very poor for foster parents. Group home administrators and counselors appeared to be better able to attend these group discussion sessions. Project staff and peer mentors also made conscientious efforts to encourage foster parents and group home counselors to be more involved in their youths' educational programs through home visits and telephone contacts.

Social Support

The final project strategy is social support. This is an effort to engage social workers, guidance counselors, and educational specialists to provide support services, such as psychotherapy, specialized tutoring, or consultation with foster parents as recommended by peer mentors and project staff. Meetings were held with our colleagues and other service providers either as a group or on individual basis throughout project years to keep them informed about the progress of the project effort as well as to elicit their assistancein providing support services.

Youth Participants

From the inception of the project, to the end of the third project year, more than one hundred foster youth were touched by the project. These youth were referred by social agencies collaborating with the project. They were either in foster homes, or in group homes, or just recently returning to their own biological families from foster homes or group homes. However, some of the youths were not truly accessed. Only 97 youths were considered participants. Among the 97 youths, 94 were Black, two were Hispanic and one Asian. Fifty were female, fourty seven were male. They came from the inner city, and the majority of them continued to live in the inner city. With the exception of ten older youth, these young people were all between the ages of 12 and 15 when they were accepted into the project. Out of the 97 participants, 10 were superficially involved while 87, 46 female and 41 male, actively participated, maintaining relationships with their peer mentors, and taking part in the project incentive programs.

Two of the project admission criteria are: 1) youth must not be mentally retarded; 2) youth must not be behind more than two years in age appropriate grade level. With a few exceptions, they attended public school. In Spring 1988 a survey of 42 project youths found that 22 (52%) were in age appropriate grades; 8 (19%) in lower grades; 10 (24%) in higher grades; and 2 (5%) in ungraded classes. Among the eight students in lower grades, only one

student was two grades behind, the rest were behind by no more than one grade. However, the actual academic skills measured by the Metropolitan Achievement Test revealed an entirely different picture. It was found that 29 (69%) project youths were significantly behind their grade level in reading. On average, students who were behind in reading lagged by almost 4 years (3.8), twice as far behind as those most likely to drop out of school according the well documented studies in the field. Additionally, 31 (74%) youths were behind in math. The mean number of years of grade retardation in math was 2.4 among this group of youths.

Project Findings

Project findings were based on data collected on the 87 active project participants. Data on the participants was collected through surveys, tests, observations, personal interviews, and periodic analysis of the school report cards. The project found that there was a rather high percentage of learning disabled among our project participants; 15% in year one, 25% in year two and 29% in year three.

Taken as a whole, regardless of the length of stay in the project, the analysis of the youths' quarterly grades revealed that the youth significantly improved their grades. Attendance was an area that the youth made remarkable progress. This is very important since the project found that there is a direct relationship between school attendance and school dropout. Youth who had excessive absenteeism from school would lag behind in grade

placement and eventually drop out.

Truancy was widespread among project youths, especially those who lived in group homes, during the first year of the project. However, with the exception of a few youth, all attended school regularly in the second and third years. The reasons for truancy were usually related to behavioral problems--running away, selling drugs, and stealing cars, for example--and to inadequate adult supervision. Teen pregnancy also affected school attendance.

Impact on Youth Participants

A survey of all the 97 youth participants, including 52 youths who are no longer in the project, revealed that only six youths were known to have dropped out of school as of September 1989. However, two of these six youths have been working full time for more than one year since they dropped out of school; another two youths joined the Job Corps; one has obtained a G.E.D. and gone on to college; and one is studying for his G.E.D.

Nine project youth have graduated from high school. Three of them went to college. The remaining project youth are still in school.

Conclusion

Based on project experiences and findings, we conclude that youth in foster care are at risk of dropping out of school. Their education has frequently been neglected or interrupted before, during and after they entered the foster care system. Their basic skills in reading and math are far behind their grade placement level, and many are in need of special education. Minority

youth in foster care, like their urban peers, are also at risk of becoming involved in illegal activities because of the ever-expanding drug trade in their neighborhoods and their own unwillingness to accept entry-level jobs which they perceive as demeaning.

The Keep Youth in School project has demonstrated that the peer mentors and employment training and incentive aspects of the program were effective ways of motivating youth to stay in school. The undergraduate college students, both Black and White, who served as peer mentors were found to be capable of serving as effective change agents.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Statement of Need

About 2.4 million youth between the ages of 16 and 19--up to half the high school population in some major cities, are unlikely to become productive adults, according to the 1985 business subcommittee of the Education Commission of the States. These young people are 'disconnected' from society as a result of drug abuse, delinquency, pregnancy, unemployment and dropping out of school. Their number is growing. The poor, Black and Hispanic teens are disproportionately over represented among this at-risk population. Of the 2.4 million 'disconnected' youths, 1,250,000 are White, 750,000 are Black and 375,000 are Hispanic. (Vobejda, 1985). In the past decade, says the Center for Education Statistics, more than one fourth of the nation's high school students have dropped out of school. Students in urban areas are more likely to drop out than those in rural and suburban areas; Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to drop out than Whites. Youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to drop out. It is estimated that the national drop out rate was 26% in 1983 and as high as 40% in many cities (Department of Education, 1983, 1986).

Faith in the power of education to open doors to a better future underlies much of the research directed at identifying causes and cures for the dropout problem. This research cites the following as barriers to school success: 1)poor motivation, 2) low self-esteem, 3) school absences, 4) tardiness, 5) frequent changes

of schools, 6) feelings of not belonging, 7) friends not oriented to school, 8) friends much older or much younger, 9) inadequate parental involvement, 10) negative perception of the opportunity structure, and 11) reading and learning disabilities (Cervantes, 1965; De Meis and Turner, 1978; Gillum, Schooley, and Novak, 1977; Granger, Mathews, Quay, and Verner, 1977; Ogbu, 1981; and Stroup, 1972). However, **poverty, poor academic performance** and **behind grade level** are the most reliable predictors for school dropout (Department of Education, 1987).

Recent studies have identified a number of adverse consequences of dropping out of school, such as difficulty in finding and holding a job, earning less income and having poorer health than high school graduates. Decreased political participation and lessened social mobility are also higher among high school dropouts than among those who have high school or college education (Feldstein and Ellwood, 1982; Department of Labor, 1988; Pallas, 1984; Alexander, Natriello, and Pallas, 1985; McDill, Natriello, and Pallas, 1986).

Youth in foster care have also been identified as those who are at risk of dropping out of school. While national statistics are lacking on the dropout rate of foster children as a group, other social indices underscore the educational needs of these children. Recent statistics from the New York City Human Resource Administration show that the dependency rate for young adults discharged from foster care was twice that found in the general population as measured by receipt of public assistance. A study

of youths discharged from substitute care in four regions found that only 34% of the 18 year olds had completed high school at the time of their discharge. In 1984, some 16,000 adolescents were discharged from care because they had reached the age of majority, but a substantial number of the discharged youth did not have the necessary skills to achieve self-sufficiency (Westat, 1986).

Over 75 percent of the children who enter foster care do so because of child abuse or neglect. The most prevalent form of neglect for Black families has been identified as educational neglect. In 1981, Black children represented 27 percent of all cases of educational neglect (NCCAN, 1981). Thus, many Black children who enter foster care, not only bear the stigma of broken homes, but also bring with them a legacy of educational neglect, and the possibility of permanent alienation from the educational system and from society as a whole.

Currently, there are more than 2,000 children in foster care in the District of Columbia. Approximately 98% of these children are Black. More than a quarter of them have been removed from parents who have emotional or substance abuse problems. Twenty one percent of the children have simply been abandoned, and 16 percent have been physically or sexually abused. In spite of available subsidies, only a few foster children are placed in permanent homes through adoption. In fact, many of these children move from one foster home to another throughout their childhoods. The average length of stay in foster home for a foster child in the District of Columbia is four and one half years, more than three

times than the national average (NBC, 1989). The need for a programmatic response to this situation is highlighted in the latest study by the District of
Columbia Committee on Public Education (1989). The study found that the current school dropout rate in the District of Columbia is over 40 percent, and many youth drop out of school while they are in junior high school.

In 1986, the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services provided a three year research and demonstration grant to the Catholic University of America to develop a practice model specifically addressing the school drop out problem among a high risk youth population, between the ages of 12 and 15, in an urban community. This project entitled "Keep Youth in School" was housed at the National Catholic School of Social Service. It was cosponsored by the Family and Child Services of Washington, D. C., the District of Columbia Department of Human Services, and the Marriott Corporation.

Collaborating Organizations

The project is a joint venture of two service delivery organization, a business corporation, and an institution of higher learning. The National catholic School of Social Service at the Catholic University of America, the lead agency of the project, is one of the nation's most renowned academic institutions for educating professional social workers.

Family and Child Services of Washington, D. C., a private non-profit organization and one of foster care providers in the District of Columbia, is an accredited member of the Family Services Association of America. It is one of the distinguished social service agencies in the human service delivery system. The D.C. Department of Human Services is a public child welfare agency. Presently, the Department has more than 2,000 children in its foster care program. Its Family and Child Services Division provides direct services as well as contracted services for foster children.

The Marriott Corporation is an innovator in the lodging and food service industry, offering a diversity of entry level positions throughout the Washington metropolitan area. Marriott has a history of hiring the disadvantaged and currently leads all other U. S. employers in earned Targeted Jobs Tax Credits (TJTC). The management of its Community Employment and Training Programs has demonstrated skills in meeting the special needs of the disadvantaged youth and in working actively in community service programs.

Theoretical Perspective

Theoretically, the Keep Youth in School project is based on the conceptual framework of ecological systems theory which postulates that there is an exchange and transactional relationship between people and environment. The literature suggests that an

urban adolescent at risk for school dropout has experienced an environment which has diminished his self-definition of his adaptive and coping capabilities in the educational environment. The work environment has simultaneously been perceived by the youth to hold little hope for future economic independence and well-being whether or not he completes school. The youth generally feels powerless to control either his environment or its definition of him now, in the present, or in the future.

The ecological systems theory holds that certain aspects of the urban inner-city environment can be changed, especially those pertaining to youth who are potential dropouts. In turn, the youth can be expected to change. Based on this theoretical perspective, the efforts of the project are directed toward improving the transactions between youth and their environment, enhancing the adaptive and coping capabilities of the youth,, and improving their environment.

Intervention Model

To address the school dropout and the subsequent unemployment problem, a number of intervention strategies have been adopted in the past. For example, some vocational programs have sought to introduce students through a combination of work and study to a range of work settings, including commercial and service institutions, profit and non-profit organizations, and international and community based operations. Students report that

these work study programs have taught them how to get along and communicate better with adults and to feel more responsive and self confident in fulfilling commitments (Greenberger and Steinberg, 1983).

Other programs, such as Job Corps, the Youth Conservation Corps and CEDA were attempts by the federal government to reduce delinquency and to break the cycle of unemployment through job training. However, many of these efforts led to frustration and limited success because they did not help youth learn to handle authority and deal with peers. Unless programs worked on developing these skills, the youth often dropped out. Program evaluation has consistently shown that an emphasis on personal development, along with educational and counseling services, is as necessary as specific job training (Shore, 1984). Some local programs, which exemplify these principles, provide the model upon which the Keep Youth in School project was built. Locally, the District of Columbia's City Lights program attempts to provide a comprehensive program of education, vocational counseling, group therapy and job placement services for chronic truants. This effort is primarily rehabilitative, its services are limited to youth who have been classified as emotionally disturbed and/or learning disabled. Furthermore, the cost of serving each youth is extremely high. The District of Columbia's Department of Employment services offers a program for economically disadvantaged youth in school who have been identified as potential dropouts. It has developed a summer youth program, which encourages youth to

stay in school. This program, while providing recreational, counseling, and referral services as well as basic work experiences, is limited to the summer months and to youth over 14 years of age.

Based on the principles and concepts of the ecological systems theory and built on the existing successful programs for youth, the Keep Youth in School project employed four major intervention strategies. These strategies are Peer Mentorship, Employment Training and Incentive Program, Involvement of Primary Caretakers, and Social Support.

Peer Mentorship

This intervention strategy is adopted because of the knowledge of the importance of peer influence during adolescence and research findings that documented the effectiveness of help given by peers (France, 1984; Frisz, 1984; Myrick and Erney, 1978; Gray and Tindall, 1978; Worrath and Brendteo, 1985). It was also known from a number of studies that college students have served as successful peer helpers for inner city youth. Some authors have stated that youth between ages 14 and 24 share one thing in common: making the transition to adulthood. Furthermore, the cross age interaction experience was found to be beneficial for all (Coleman, 1974; Lippitt, 1975). These studies have emphasized the importance of training, structure and support for such helping relationships. In addition, persons who receive pay, training and supervision were generally very effective (Shaver, 1969; McCleary, 1971).

The objective of using peer mentors in the project is to motivate and encourage youth to stay in school through role modeling, advice giving and reinforcement of positive behavior. Undergraduate students at the Catholic University of America (CUA) are recruited to serve as mentors to foster youth enrolled in the project. Each mentor has a choice of working with one or two youth, and giving 5 or 10 hours every week to the project during the academic year. In return, the mentors receive a stipend, approximately $750 per academic year, from the project.

Employment Training and Incentive Program

The purpose of this program is to provide incentives for project youth so that they will be inspired to complete high school, to develop appropriate attitudes toward work, and to adapt themselves to the world of work. Employment training and opportunity for job interviews are assured to all project youth as soon as they reach 16 years of age, and as long as they stay in school. As one of the collaborating organizations, the Marriott Corporation plays a key role in implementing this program. The Corporation designates three executives from its Community Employment and Training Programs to work closely with the project staff. Together, they are responsible to conduct motivational lectures, set up prescreening sessions, locate appropriate work sites, arrange job site interviews, monitor youth's work performance, and communicate with peer mentors, social workers, and primary caretakers.

For all project youth including those under 16 years of age, an incentive program is developed by the joint effort of project staff and Marriott executives. To begin, the youth receive letters, welcoming them to Marriott and inviting them to a Marriott presentation which includes greetings from the Marriott, a speech by a successful Black executive in the Corporation, and a motivational film to join the Marriott's work force. All youth receive Marriott frisbees, hats and food coupons.

Subsequent incentive program activities include a variety of social and recreational events held on monthly basis. The University welcomes the youths with a open door policy for project youths to use its facilities. In addition, the University's Campus Ministry provides a van for project staff to transport youths for group and camping activities.

Involvement of Primary Caretakers

This feature of the project seek to reinforce the findings from several studies (Mize, 1977; Gillum, Schooley and Novah, 1977), which demonstrated a high correlation between various forms of parental involvement and improved school performance of children. Since the youths enrolled in the project are foster children, their primary caretakers (either foster parents or group home counselors) are regarded as parent surrogates.

The effort to involve primary caretakers begins with the orientation meetings at the beginning of the project. Group and individual meetings are held as needed throughout the project

years. The ultimate goal of these meetings is to promote the primary caretakers' involvement in their youths' education as well as to obtain feedback regarding as how they feel the project can work more effectively with their youths.

Social Support

Research has shown that an individual's success in social functioning is positively related the availability of social supports. People function in society more effectively and solve life tasks more efficiently when they are given support (Barlett, 1970). It is assumed that project youth can cope more effectively, and achieve the task of acquiring job and educational skills if they are provided with supportive services. Both the department of Human services and the member agencies of D. C. Foster Care Consortium, in their capacities as providers of foster care services, are responsible for providing or procuring the support services, such as psychotherapy, family therapy, specialized tutoring, and testing according to each child's needs. In addition, agency social workers are urged to support and guide the peer mentors as well as to encourage their foster youth to be involved in the project.

Consistent with the intent of social support, all peer mentors are asked to keep agency social workers informed about their youths' progress and seek consultation from social workers when they have problems with the youth. Project staff members meet with group home directors and counselors periodically to find out ways

that peer mentors can work successfully with their residents.

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to develop a replicable model to help at-risk youth between the ages of 12 and 15 stay in school. The project goals are to keep project youth in school until completing their high school education, preparing them to become employed, and encouraging them to pursue a higher education.

The objectives for goal attainment are to improve school attendance, to prevent dropping out of school, to enhance academic performance, to increase work skills, to graduate from high school, and to develop positive attitudes toward school, work and self.

Target Population

The Project has a maximum serving capacity of 60 youth. It targeted a group of 12 to 15 year old minority foster youth who were at risk of dropping out of school. The youth are referred by the District of Columbia's Department of Human Services, the Family and Child Services of Washington, D. C. and the member agencies of the Consortium of Child Welfare. When the youth enter the project, they either live in foster homes or group homes, or they have just recently returned to their own biological parents from foster homes or group homes. All project youth volunteer to participate, and they can terminate their involvement at any time. Agreement to

participate is also obtained from their group home counselors, foster parents or natural parents.

CHAPTER 11. THE PROGRAM

The Setting

The Keep Youth in School Project operates in a setting of higher education and scholarly learning. It is located on the campus of the Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C.

The Catholic University of America, a privately funded research oriented University, was established in 1887 by the American Bishops as a national Catholic institution of higher learning. Established as a center for graduate study, The Catholic University of America has evolved into a modern American University, which meets the standards of educational associations and accrediting bodies of the United States. The University which serves 8500 students, is a charter member of the Association of American Universities.

The University was originated to provide graduate and professional education, but it soon began offering undergraduate courses as well. Undergraduate degrees were offered beginning in 1897. Though a research and teaching institution, the University recognizes that it is part of a larger community to which it has certain obligations. Its presence in the nation's Capital and its unique relationship with the Catholic Church in America provide it with opportunities for influencing the crucial issues of our time.

The project is administered through the National Catholic School of Social Service (NCSSS). As a part of the University,

NCSSS has special responsibilities to contribute to, and to be of service to the general community, the nation and the world. NCSSS has been a recipient of local and regional child welfare training and research grants for over two decades. The school's high visibility and leadership position in the community, have enabled the project to be executed successfully in the Washington D.C area.

The setting of the Keep Youth in School Project on a campus of higher education offers many valuable experiences to both the undergraduates of the university, who serve as peer mentors, and the foster youth who we serve.

College undergraduates are in a unique position to serve as change agents. Many of them have left the comfort and security of their families, and are on their own for the very first time. Their curiosity about the world is at its peak. The Keep Youth in School Project offers them the opportunity to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with minority youth of the inner-city. It is a chance to encounter life situations different from their own, while helping others and serving their community. Their experience in a project such as this, may instill in them a sense of collective responsibility and can often lead them to a permanent commitment to community service.

The Catholic University of America offers a variety of opportunities for the foster youth to become acquainted with campus life. The youth, with their mentors, use student lounges and classrooms, visit student dormitories and utilize the newly built Raymond A. Dufour Center, a multi-purpose sports facility, where

they can swim, play basketball and lift weights. They use the campus library and attend sporting, cultural and educational events on campus. The youths participate in these activities with their own peer mentors or with other mentors, friends and family members.

On campus, the youth are exposed to an atmosphere focused on education as a means of achievement. In their interactions with University students, the youth feel welcome and accepted; the University campus becomes a part of their eco-system. The youths' experience in the project broadens their social environment, enriches their life experiences, and expands their social network support system.

Staffing

The staff of the Keep Youth in School Project included four part time positions, Project Director, Research Director, Training Director, and secretary, as well as one full-time position, Program Coordinator. The direct service providers are the undergraduates, recruited to work with either one or two foster youth.

It is the job of the Project Director to oversee all operations of the project, the staff and the programming. The Director of the Project assumes all of the fiscal responsibilities of the project, and submits quarterly and final reports to the funding organization. The Director hires and supervises all project staff as well as a group of peer mentors.

The Research Director is responsible for all research done

throughout the project. She collects and analyzes data at the onset of the project, continually throughout the project, and upon termination of the project. The feedback of the Research Director is a very important part of program development and re-definition.

The Training Director is responsible for the preparation and training of University undergraduates to serve as peer mentors to inner-city foster youth. His job is to create and implement relevant training programs which will equip the peer mentors with the necessary skills to handle situations they are likely to confront in their jobs. The Training Director is also responsible for the weekly supervision of a group of peer mentors.

The Program Coordinator is responsible for assisting the Project Director in planning and implementing all major programs and activities of the project, most importantly the employment and incentive program. She is the coordinator of the employment program in cooperation with the Marriott Corporation. Other administrative responsibilities include, accepting referrals, recruiting and interviewing peer mentors, weekly supervision of a group of mentors, and the development of youth and mentor newsletters. The Program Coordinator is also available to assist other project staff in any capacity.

At the end of the third project year, the model which we have developed for replication will be administered with a staff of three consisting of a full-time Project Director, a full-time Program Coordinator, and a part-time secretary. The training and research responsibilities can be absorbed by the two full-time

staff, and the supervision of mentors can be divided between them.

Staff Qualification

The Project Director and the Evaluation Director were NCSSS faculty members. The Training Director was also a faculty member in project year one and two. The Assistant Dean of Students served as the training director for project year three. However, the program coordinator position has been occupied by three CUA graduates upon their completion of the undergraduate program in social work. The appointment of young BSW professionals in their early twenties was designed to provide peer mentors with a role model in the project. We found that these young professionals were able to successfully assist Project Director and other staff members in carrying out the mission of the project. Their ability to establish rapport with the undergraduates, to reach out to the youth and primary caretakers, and to function with minimum supervision has been a great asset in the project.

Project Services

The Project operated on a year round basis. However, program activities were less intense during the summer months as the great majority of the peer mentors left the campus for vacation. A handful of mentors were retained to maintain contacts with youth on a group basis. The main focus during the summer was employment training and incentive program activities.

Peer Mentorship

Peer mentorship, the centerpiece of the project programs, was one of the strategies used to reach project objectives. This program strategy involved recruiting Catholic University undergraduate students to serve as peer mentors to one or two foster youths in the District of Columbia. The mentors befriended, tutored and counseled their youth with the goal of motivating them to stay in school. Peer mentors encouraged youths to stay in school through role modeling, advice-giving, feedback, support, and reinforcement of positive behavior.

Recruitment and Selection

Peer mentors were recruited campus wide in the beginning of an academic year. Recruitment was focused on all university undergraduates between the ages of 17 and 24, regardless of their field of study within the university. Advertisements were placed in campus buildings such as classrooms, dormitories, student lounges and cafeterias. Announcements and articles were run in the campus newspaper, and a recruitment flyer was placed in the Orientation Packet of all incoming freshmen and transfer students. In addition to our regular channels for recruitment, we also worked with the campus office of Services for Minority Students in an effort to recruit minority undergraduates. Our program staff had developed a working relationship with this office, which oversees the financial needs, and academic progress of the minority students on campus. (The director of this office was also the Training

Director in our project during the third project year.) One of the most effective methods of peer mentor recruitment happened to be an informal system of word of mouth referrals. This informal system was most useful for on-going recruitment as needed throughout the academic year. When a peer mentor position became open, project staff relied on our most active peer mentors, to solicit applicants from their undergraduate peers. Once a program had been established on campus, this informal system could also be utilized at the end of an academic year to recruit for mentors needed for the fall.

All new recruits began the application process by filling out an application (See Appendix 1). This application sought not only demographic data, but also information about the applicant's interests, academic performance, access to a car and possible time commitment to the project. These issues were discussed at an initial interview with the program coordinator. New applicants were asked to attend the initial training workshop at the beginning of each academic year. At this time, after applicants had been exposed to training concerning what their role would be with the foster youth, and after they had a clear idea of what was expected of them, they were once again screened by project staff.

Final selection was based on the interviews with the applicants, their participation in training, and the needs of the project. Project staff sought students whose academic schedules were not extraordinarily demanding (i.e. no more than 15 academic credits per semester), and whose semester grade point average was

2.0 or better. Students who were involved in many other campus activities, clubs or sports and students who held other jobs or worked many hours per week were found to be too busy to serve as effective peer mentors. In addition, seniors and students with majors in architecture, nursing and biology, programs with demanding laboratory schedules, were found not able to give adequate time commitment to the project.

In selecting mentors, project staff looked for students with their own transportation or whose who did not object taking public transportation. Mentors who had the capacity to care about others and who were not afraid to reach out to youth were most successful. There were often applicants who presented themselves as experienced, understanding and altruistic or 'just too good to be true'-- these 'super star' students often did not serve as effective mentors. They were found to be easily frustrated when 'success' did not come quickly in their relationships with the youth. These students usually dropped out after a few weeks.

The original recruitment efforts were concentrated on undergraduates in the university who were enrolled in the social work, psychology and education departments. Preference was given to those tho were sophomores or juniors. Nevertheless, a few seniors and freshmen were also accepted. After the first year when virtually all of these mentors left the project, project staff began to consider all majors and freshmen equally within the University. In the third year, many freshmen were recruited because quite a few freshmen became very successful and

conscientious mentors during the second year.

Responsibilities

The role of peer mentor incorporates the roles of friend, tutor, counselor and model. Peer mentors carry out these roles by developing a relationship with the youth through helping them with their homework and exposing youth to a variety of social, recreational and educational experiences. Peer mentors are accompanied by project staff on the initial visit of their youth. After this initial contact, mentors are responsible for setting up and maintaining weekly appointments with their youth. They are required to spend fives hour per week with each of their assigned youth or on activities related to their youth or the project. These other activities, besides tutoring, included visits to the youth's school, participation in the incentive program activities with youth, attendance at periodic training sessions and weekly supervision with project staff. Peer mentors are also responsible for keeping primary care takers informed of all activities concerning their youth.

Retention

Over the three years of the project, project staff became increasingly sensitive to the needs of the peer mentors, and have come to achieve a high retention rate among peer mentors. This begins with the project staff's improved ability to select successful peer mentors, as earlier discussed. After peer mentors

are selected project staff do as much as possible to provide peer mentors with the structure, guidance and support they need to be successful through training and supervision. Matching mentors with youth is usually done by considering age, academic strengths, and personal interests. However, access to a car is often the determining factor in assigning mentors to youth who live in far away suburban communities. Finally, gender and race are matching criteria when youth have special emotional needs.

Once an assignment is made, a staff member will take the mentor to meet with the youth and his foster parent or group home counselor. A mentor is required to meet with a staff mentor for weekly individual supervision as soon as he begins to work with a youth. Supervision sessions may last 15 minutes to an hour. Back up services by staff members are provided whenever problems arise. For example, a supervising staff member will call and participate in a conference with a youth, his social worker, and primary caretaker when his mentor has serious concern about his educational program or a behavior problem.

Beginning at the second year, project staff began to consciously promote mutual support among the peer mentors. Mentors are assigned to four small groups with four mentors serving as group leaders. These groups meet periodically on their own and carry out joint activities for their youths. Recognition of mentors for their outstanding achievements and efforts with their youths is made through a bi-monthly newsletter entitled 'Share'. One of the mentors volunteers to be editor for the newsletter.

Informal social gatherings for all mentors take place several times a year to further the cohesion among the mentors.

Between October 1986 and September 1989, more than 100 undergraduates served as friends, tutors and counselors to one or two youth. Over the three year period, however, there has been a significant and exciting change in the project's ability to retain peer mentors. While during the first two years, mentors usually stayed in the project for one semester to one year, by the end of the third academic year (May 1989), 42 mentors were actively involved. Six of them left the project because of graduation and the rest of them expressed a willingness to continue to work in the project for another year. In September 1989, we begin to use experienced peer mentors to supervise new mentors.

Training

Training is the first step in helping the mentors feel confident in their jobs and in themselves. Intense initial training was provided for all new peer mentors at the beginning of each academic year. Periodic training sessions were offered throughout the year based on assessed needs of peer mentors.

The most essential skills and information were transmitted during the initial training. These sessions covered communications skills with attention to cultural and racial factors as well as social and environmental concerns. Both general and specific information were provided on the realities of life in foster care, including insights into the values, fears and aspirations of the

youth with whom the mentors would be relating. Information on the local school systems, introductory steps in the tutoring process, and the roles and responsibilities of the mentors were also discussed.

Over the three years, a wide range of topics were covered during the periodic training sessions. These topics included: 1) Communication strategies within the Black community; 2) Problem solving--contracting and goal setting; 3) Cross cultural communication; 4) Effective strategies in advocacy and in communicating with teachers and other school personnel; 5) Developing linkages with social workers and foster parents; 6) Confidentiality issues and procedures; 7) Tutorial issues and strategies; 8) Skills in tutoring English, Math and Spelling; 9) Helping the learning disabled; 10) Career opportunities in the 1980's; 11) Adolescent growth and development; 12) Issues in teen pregnancy; 13) Substance abuse counseling.

Furthermore, some training sessions were used in planning group activities, sharing experiences with each other, and giving suggestions and feedbacks to project staff. Issues such as burnout, transportation difficulties, and youths' resistance and conflicts with primary caretakers were also addressed in these sessions.

Training was planned and coordinated by the training director. Sessions were conducted by the Training Director and staff members as well as University and community expert consultants. Intensive training sessions lasted a total of eight

hours in two days. Monthly follow-up sessions lasted two hours each and took place during the week day evenings.

Employment and Incentive Program

The employment and incentive program strategy encompassed two separate programs both aimed at supporting and encouraging our youth to stay in school and excel in it. The employment program achieved this by rewarding youth who stayed in school with an entry level job when they turned sixteen. For our youth, this program was also used as an introduction to the world of work and a chance to develop appropriate attitudes towards work and job skills. The incentive program was developed for all youth under rewarding them for academic efforts and expose them to new experiences.

Employment

Employment training and opportunities were assured to all project participants when they turned age sixteen, as long as they remained in school. These employment opportunities were made available to our youth through a partnership with a collaborating agency, the Community Employment and Training Programs of the Marriott Corporation. Youth were given the opportunity to interview with the Marriott Corporation for entry level positions in its restaurant division, at such establishments as Roy Rogers, Hot Shoppes and Bob's Big Boy. Once an eligible youth had chosen to participate in the employment program, a prescreening session was held either by the project program coordinator or a Marriott

representative. This person met with one or more youth and conducted an interview workshop and gave the youth information about their on-site interviews. Also discussed were other employment issues such as job expectations, the importance of communication, dealing with authority, and opportunities for advancement and career paths in the Marriott Corporation. The youth then chose a desired location at which to interview, and this placement was discussed with the youth's primary caretaker. The program coordinator then helped the youth to assemble all the necessary documents they needed to apply for the job. These documents include a birth certificate, social security card, picture I.D. and a work permit. An interview was then set up with the manager at the desired job site and the youth was accompanied by the program coordinator to the interview. If all necessary documents were present, the youths were generally able to begin working one week after the pre-screening session. Once a youth began to work, follow up contacts were made by the program coordinator to the youth, manager and primary caretaker to ensure a smooth transition into the world of work, and to clarify responsibilities and expectations of all involved.

It is the experience of the project that the active involvement of the collaborating agency, the Marriott Corporation, in the employment preparation process was extremely important. When a prescreening workshop was done by a Marriott executive it was more effective than when it was done by the Program Coordinator. It appeared that these youth were more likely to

begin work, and work longer than those without contact with a Marriott executive. The difference between these groups, as reflected in project year one and project year two and three, was that youth were able to make a connection between the entry level experience they would get now, and how it would help them obtain a better job in the future. They also identified with the Marriott Corporation as a whole and could see career paths lying ahead.

Incentive Program

For youths under age sixteen, an incentive program was developed through the joint efforts of the project staff and Marriott executives. The incentive program aims to: 1) encourage and reward academic achievement; 2) broaden the support system to include those who are interested in the youths' educational programs; and, 3) to expose youth to educational, cultural and social experiences which will inspire them to set academic goals and standards for themselves.

The Awards Ceremony, held twice a year, was the main vehicle for rewarding youth for academic achievement. Youth were rewarded for grade improvement, perfect or improved school attendance, graduation, and continued participation in school and the project. Recognition was also given to youth for outstanding work performance. Over the years, youth were rewarded with gifts, such as book bags, calculators, and radios; gift certificates to area stores; fast food coupons and cash money. The favorite of these awards were the cash awards, and the least favorite was the gift

certificates. The youth were not able to place any value on these certificates and consequently they were not used. All youth who remained in school and actively participated in the project received certificates at the end of each academic year and these they did appear to appreciate for their intrinsic value.

To give continuous recognition to youths throughout the year, a newsletter, entitled "Youth Today" was developed. This newsletter which was produced several times a year by the program coordinator, recognized youth accomplishments in academics, sports, employment and extra-curricular activities. It also featured articles, poems and drawings by the youth participants and contained announcements of activities, "Youth Today" was also distributed to the youths' social workers, foster parents and group home staff, so that they might recognize the achievements of the youth. Both the newsletter and the awards ceremonies served as measures of success for the youth and highlighted events in which they could take pride.

Another incentive program strategy to convey important information and values to youth was through the use of educational and motivational guest speakers from the community. Over the three years the speakers included Marriott executives, a university athletic director, a radio and television disc jockey, an ex-drug user and a personnel director in the White house. Most of the guest speakers were Black. The speakers addressed topics such as the importance of education, self-motivation, self esteem, and the consequences of selling and using drugs.

In an effort to foster growth and cohesion within youth and within the group, the incentive program hosted many educational, cultural and social functions for the youth, their friends and families. The most popular and most dramatic of these events were the weekend camping trips. A group of youth, mentors and staff would spend the weekend in the Shanendoah Mountains of Virginia without any plumbing or electricity. These trips offered youth the opportunity to experience a world outside of the inner city. Not only was it a chance for the youth to let down their defenses, but the wilderness provided many challenges to be mastered, including hiking, rock climbing, repelling, campfire cooking and basic survival. Through the mastery of these tasks youth emerged with a heightened sense of identity, self-esteem, social competence and interrelatedness. Since the inception of the trips over 50 youths have had this outdoor experience with many of them going several times.

Over the three years, the incentive program has included various other activities such as a basketball tournament, an educational tour of the University of the District of Columbia, Black History Month events, trips to a roller skating ring and the Wild World, holiday and spring celebrations. Furthermore, peer mentors' contacts on campus have encouraged a number of campus organizations such as fraternities, dorms and social clubs to host receptions and special events for the youth. These events have included an annual Halloween Haunted House, a trip to the National Zoo and a college football game. All of the incentive group

activities were open to youths' family members and friends. By including their friends and family members in project activities, relationships with significant others were enhanced.

Involvement of primary caretakers

The third program strategy concerned the involvement of the youths' primary caretakers. The Keep Youth in School Project wanted to involve these primary caretakers in the educational planning, experiences and concerns of their foster youth.

This involvement began at the time a youth was referred to the project by his social worker. Because participation is on a voluntary basis, the youth and his foster parent or group home director are consulted about the youth's participation in the project. Group sessions were held periodically throughout the project years to address caretakers concerns about their youth, to share information on youths' progress, and to discuss ways in which caretakers might facilitate academic development. In the first year of the project all primary caretakers were invited to an orientation meeting at the university. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce all parties involved. Youth participants, foster parents, group home counselors and peer mentors were given an overview of the goals and format of the Project. The procedure for inviting people was letters followed by phone calls. Only six foster parents, one group home counselor and one natural parent attended the orientation meeting. Another meeting was attempted a few weeks later, and only nine primary caretakers attended.

In February of 1987 a meeting was held at Family and Child Services for foster parents of youth of that agency. The goal of that meeting was to get feedback from parents and collect data on youth and caretakers. Six out of the 14 foster parents invited attended the meeting, giving very positive feedback on the project. A similar meeting was held at the Department of Human Services, but only six group home staff attended.

In May 1988, in the second year, another meeting was held at the university for all primary caretakers and social workers. The purpose was to view the project videotape, update workers on the project and exchange ideas. Two Foster parents attended.

In year three, after failed attempts at group participation for primary caretakers, a more individualized strategy was adopted. This individualized strategy paralleled the individualized approach taken in working with the youth, an approach which included home visits and telephone contacts by project staff and peer mentors to foster parents and group home staff.

In March of year three, because so many of our youth were living in group homes, we held another special meeting for group home staff. Although all six group home directors and staff were invited, only four people attended but this was due in part to a severe snow storm. The issues discussed were communication between peer mentors and staff, regular schedules for meetings, and continuation of the project beyond September 31, 1989.

Throughout all three years, foster parents, group home staff and relatives were invited to all of the incentive program

activities along with the youth. On a few occasions, one or two foster parents or group home counselors attended. But youth would most often bring friends, siblings and cousins to the activities.

Discussion

It appeared that group home administrators and counselors were more interested and better able to attend these group sessions. Foster parents tended to have many other foster children or natural children that they must care for, and it was often difficult for them find relief, while group home staff could leave behind a person for coverage. Both foster parents and group home directors worried about the school attendance, study habits, attitudes toward school and behavior of their youth. All primary caretakers also desired continuous communication with peer mentors about their activities with the youth, and preferred peer mentors to set regular appointments with advance notification allowing for clearance of planned activities.

Project experience has indicated that it was imperative that primary caretakers support the program in order for the peer mentors to be effective. On several occasions, when foster parents or group home counselors did not support the project, they either overtly or covertly sabotaged the peer mentor relationships with their youth by discouraging or forbidding youth to see mentors. We learned that mentors **must** work through primary caretakers with a non-threatening and respectful manner in their effort to reach the youth.

Social Support

The final project strategy was social support. This strategy is intended to engage the significant people in the youth's life, in addition to primary caretakers, to be attentive to the youth's situation. These significant people are social workers, guidance counselors, teachers, and educational specialists who either control the resources or are responsible in some way for the youth. Since most of the project youth were wards of the District of Columbia, their social workers had tremendous influence on their lives. Therefore, much of the effort at providing support for the youths was directed towards their social workers. This effort took two forms: one was group information sessions with workers, and the other was the on-going contacts with each worker throughout the year by staff and mentors.

At the beginning of the project, staff members met with the representatives of the collaborating agencies clarifying roles and responsibilities. Letters and referral forms were distributed to social workers at social service agencies. In February of 1987, five months into the project, group meetings were held at the collaborating agencies to obtain feedback about the project from the social workers. The meeting at Family and Child Services drew a 95% turnout of social workers, while at The Department of Human Services, 23% of the social workers attended. Both agencies responded favorably to the project and wanted to continue to refer youths to the project.

In May 1988, social workers and educational specialists also

attended a meeting with foster parents and group home staff. Nineteen persons viewed the first project video and were given a project update.

At the end of the third year, in March 1989 social workers were invited to a final meeting to discuss their experiences with the project and to view the last project video. Of the 26 social workers invited seven actually attended.

Despite poor attendance at group sessions, individual contact was made regularly by the peer mentors and the project staff to the social workers. Peer mentors initiated contact for many reasons such as concerns about school or home, inability to contact youth, or relationship problems. Whenever possible, peer mentors were asked to give progress reports to social workers about how the youth were doing in the project and in school. The project staff often met with social workers and other professionals to elicit their assistance or make referrals for psychotherapy, specialized tutoring, educational testing and consultation for foster parents. There were also cases in which a youth was in an inappropriate school placement and the project staff brought it to the attention of the proper professionals and a more appropriate placement was found.

Because the peer mentors had weekly contact with their youth, they often gathered information about a youth's situation or problem before his social worker. Project staff and peer mentors have reported suspected physical abuse in a foster home, educational neglect, and truancy.

In the third year, an experienced peer mentor was designated to help gather relevant educational information about each youth and monitor their educational and vocational placements. This approach grew out of a desire by the project staff to compile an individual educational plan for each youth in the program in an effort to tutor and mentor them more effectively. This educational profile included the youth's school placement, reason for placement, learning disabilities, individual education plans, strengths and concerns (See Appendix 2). This information was obtained through contacts and interviews with guidance counselors, teachers and educational directors of group homes. It was used in working with the youth as well as to share information with social workers in monitoring youth's educational progress.

Discussion

Overall, social workers were very appreciative of the involvement of the peer mentors and project staff in their youths' lives. It was the experience of the project that agency social workers were very cooperative and committed. But, they suffer from an overburdened, understaffed system which demands that they carry unmanageable caseloads. They were very grateful for the extra attention their youth received in the project because they could not spend that amount of time with their youth. Despite all of the appreciation, there were times when social workers could not respond to our referrals because they had other cases in a crisis situation that demanded higher priority. Although social workers

wished to have a higher degree of involvement with their youth, it was often impossible for them to do so. Some social workers wished that our peer mentors could be more 'therapeutic' and effective with the very resistant and disturbed youth.

One dilemma experienced in the project was that of confidentiality. As peer mentors developed therapeutic relationships with their youth, the youth often confided in them. At times, these confidences included situations unknown to the social worker. The peer mentors experienced a conflict in that they did not want to betray the trust their youth put in them, but felt that someone should be told about the situation, someone who was in a position to change it. Peer mentors did give this information to their project supervisors, who made contact with the youth's social workers when appropriate.

Reporting these situations, often covered up by foster parents or group home counselors, to social workers sometimes resulted in termination of the youth's relationship with the mentor. This was due to resentment and anger on the part of primary caretakers and the inability of social workers to intervene effectively. Social workers' inability to intervene was not only due to their oversized caseloads, but also their agency's difficulty in recruiting foster homes. The inadequate supply of foster homes often leaves social workers in a position of not wanting to jeopardize existing placements.

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter defines the research methodology utilized in the study. It includes a general description of the design, sampling and population studied, data collection procedures, the research instruments, and the analysis design.

Design

The study used a single sample, before/after design. Given the service demonstration nature of the project, replacements were made whenever anyone left the project over the three year period of the study's duration.

Sample

Entrance criteria to the project, required that no one have an IQ below 85, that no one be more than two years behind their chronological age grade placement, and that no one be seriously emotionally disturbed. Additionally, the youth were to be in foster care, be between the ages of 12 to 15 and be willing to participate in all aspects of the project, including testing for purposes of evaluation.

The population from which the sample was drawn, consisted of all youth in the District of Columbia who met the above entrance criteria and who were referred to the project by the District of

Columbia Department of Human Services, Child and Family Services of Washington, D. C. and member agencies of the Consortium of Child Welfare. The project accepted all those who were referred who were willing to participate. With the exception of 10 youth the sample and the population from which it came are essentially the same.

The project was designed to serve 80 youth over a period of three years with a maximum serving capacity of 60 youth. 70 of the 80 youth would be 12 to 15 years of age and 10 would be 16 to 17 years of age when they entered the project. The reason 10 older youth were in the first project year is to provide actual role models for the younger group, because the 10 older youth would be offered employment training immediately by the Marriott Corporation. These ten older youth were randomly selected from the referring agencies. Younger participants aged 12 to 15 were selected to replace those older youth as they left the program.

Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

Data were collected through testings, surveys, personal interviews, examination of case records and periodic analysis of the school report cards. During the project's first year, the Battle Culture Free Self Esteem Inventory was used to assess the self-esteem of the youth as they entered the project. The inventory was developed out of the recognition that how one feels about oneself (affective domain) affects cognitive achievement. The inventory was standardized on boys and girls in grades three

through nine but has been used successfully to assess senior high school pupils as well. Based on thirty studies over a six year period, the inventory has been found to be valid and reliable.

To asses attitude toward school four questions were added to the self-esteem inventory. Youth were asked to respond Yes/No. The Questions were as follows: I like school, My friends like school, I expect to graduate, and My teachers are friendly.

In year two, the Metropolitan Achievement Test was administered to 42 year two participants. The test was used to assess the youths math and reading levels.

In year three, two survey questionnaires were developed and administered to assess mentor/participant satisfaction with the project (See Appendix 4 and 5). Feedback was sought about what did and did not work in the project.

Throughout the project years, quarterly school report cards were obtained to assess grade improvement and to monitor attendance and school status.

Data Analysis

The data were edited, coded and key punched. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis as well as for cleaning the data and checking coding and key punch errors through frequency distribution and contingency tables. SPSS is an integrated system of computer programs designed for the analysis of social science data; the system provides a

unified and comprehensive package that enables the user to perform many different types of data analysis in a simple and convenient manner. Descriptive statistics utilizing frequencies, percentages, means and modes are used to describe the sample. Sign Test and t Test was used for testing the major variables.

CHAPTER 1V. FINDINGS

Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter, the project was designed to have a maximum serving capacity of 60 youth and to serve 80 youth over a period of three years. Therefore, replacements became necessary for those who were not accessed or who left the project. A total of 122 youth were accepted from October 1986 to September 1989. However, 25 of them were not accessed. Only 97 were considered as participants. 87 of them were active participants and 10 were superficially involved.

Part I of this chapter describes the number of youth served, their time of project access and departure as well as their length of time in the project. The analysis for part I is based on an N of 87 which represents the total number of youth who were actively involved in the project at sometime during its three years of operation.

With the exception of gender and agency auspice, most of the other variables are analyzed within the context of year of project participation. In addition to the fact that the N of a given project year was not composed of exactly the same youth, analysis of the data by each project year was further warranted by modifications in project operations. Such modifications were consistent with the protocol and the demonstration-evaluation-longitudinal nature of the study. Part II of this section

describes the sample for each project year on key socio-demographic variables. Part III analyzes the major variables. Part 1V gives the results of peer mentors and youth participants evaluation of the project.

PART 1 Participation Description

Scope

The project protocol required that eighty (80) youths be served by the project over a period of three years. Table 1 indicates that this goal was essentially met. Fifty-four (54) youths were served in project year one, sixty-two (62) in project year two and fifty-four (54) in project year three.

Table 1. Number of Active Youth in the Project

Year	Number
1986 to 1987	54
1987 to 1988	62
1988 to 1989	54

Replacements and Departures.

Forty-five (45) youth entered the project at its inception. Nine (9) youth were added to the project in January, bringing the number of youth involved in the project during its first year to fifty-four (54). Seven (7) youth from this group left the project;

two (2) during the academic year and five (5) in the summer between project year one and project year two.

Forty-seven (47) youth were carried over from year one. Seven (7) youth were added to the project as replacements at the beginning of the second year and an additional eight (8) youth were added in January of year two to bring the total number of youth served by the project in its second year to sixty-two (62). Twenty-four (24) youth left the project during its second year; ten (10) during the year and fourteen (14) in the summer between project year two and project year three.

Thirty-eight (38) youth were carried over from year two to year three. Of these thirty-eight carry overs, thirteen (13) were from year one and twenty-five (25) from year two. Ten (10) youths were added as replacements at the beginning of year three and an additional six (6) were added in January, bringing the total number of youths served in project year three to fifty-four (54).

Length of Stay

Participants spent varying amounts of time in the project, as reflected by their time of access and/or departure history. Table 2 shows that thirteen youth (13) participated in the project for a full three years. Twenty-one (21) youth participated in the project for two or more years but not three years. Forty-one (41) youth participated a year or more but not two years. Only eleven (11) youth participated in the project for less than one year. The **mean length of stay** in the project was **20.8** months.

Table 3. Length of Stay

Length of Time	Number	%
3 full years	13	15
2 years to 3 years	21	24
1 year to 2 years	41	47
Less than 1 year	12	14

Reason for Leaving the Project

The thirty-nine youth who left the project or became inactive participants were examined to determine why they left the project or ceased to be active. It was found that in twenty-two (22) of the thirty-nine (39) cases the participants left the project because they no longer met project enrollment criteria (See Table 4). Six (6) were withdrawn following changes in placements and subsequent natural/foster parent objection to their participation. Nine (9) became inaccessible due to abscondence, incarceration or residential placement. Five (5) graduated from high school. Two (2), despite repeated efforts by project staff and mentors, refused to attend school.

A better picture of the actual project dropout rate emerges when these twenty-two cases are removed from the analysis. Seventeen (17) youth, approximately five per year if averaged over the three year period, left the project for lack of interest and/or lack of the establishment of a consistent mentor relationship.

Such a mortality rate is not unreasonable for a three year study.

An earlier comparison at the end of year one of those who remained in the project with those who left the project showed that the participant at risk for dropping out of the project was the youth who was the older youth accepted, and who was in one of the following living arrangements: independent living, group home or returned to parent.

Table 4. Reasons for Leaving the Project

	Number of Youth
A. Ceased to Meet Eligibility	
Objection of Natural/Foster Parents	6
Abscondence,Incarceration, Residential Placements	5
Graduations	5
Not Attending School	2
Subtotal	22
B. Dropout/Inactive	
Loss of Interest, Problems in Establish relationships with mentors	17
Total	39

Part 11

Socio-Demographic Description of Sample for Each Year

Gender

The within and between year gender distribution did not significantly differ from that observed for all participants over the three year period (See Table 5). Based on an N of 87, 53% of the youth served were female and 47% were male over a period of three years.

Table 5. Gender By Year

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Male	24	26	27
Female	30	36	27
Total	54	62	54

Agency Auspice

Similarly, the within and between year distribution of agency auspice did not differ from that observed for all participants over the three year period. Based on an N of 87, 55% of the youth in the project were referred by the District of Columbia Department of Human Services, 29% came into the project under the auspices of Family and Children Services of the District of Columbia, 14% were referred by Associated Catholic Charities and 2% entered the project under other auspices.

Type of Living Arrangements

In project year one, (N=54), 55% of the youth were living in family foster homes. 9% were in foster group homes. 28% of this group experienced a change in living arrangements which involved two different types of placements. For purposes of this report, such a situation will henceforth be referred to as mixed living arrangements. In year one, two youths were living with relatives and two were with their natural parents.

In project year two, (N=62), 52% of the youth were in family foster care. 16% were in foster group homes. 23% of year two's participants experienced mixed living arrangements. Also in year two, three youth were living with relatives and three were with their natural parents.

In project year three, (N=54), 39% of the youth were in family foster care, 39% were in foster group care and 9% experienced mixed living arrangements. In year three, three youth continued to live with relatives and four were with their natural parents (See Table 6).

Table 6. Types of Living Arrangements

	Foster Homes		Group Homes		Mixed		Relatives		Parents		Total
Year	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
1	30	55	5	9	15	28	2	4	2	4	54
2	32	52	10	16	14	23	3	4.5	3	4.5	62
3	21	39	21	39	5	9	3	6	4	7	54

The data show a substantial increase in group foster care over the three year period; from 9% percent in year one to 38% percent in year three. This pattern parallels a shift in the age distribution of the youth over the three year period (See Table 7). In year one 17% of the participants were age 16 or older. In year two, 40% of the participants were 16 or older. By year three, this percentage rose to 48. The data suggest, along with the data on mixed living arrangements, that older children in substitute care are at risk for maintaining family foster care. Further investigation ought to explore this finding by examining the age of foster parents used in family foster care and their felt competency to parent older adolescents in a high risk urban environment.

Age Distribution

As mentioned above, Table 7 describes the age distribution of youth participants over the three year period. In year one, the average age of the youth was 14.3 years. 83% percent of the youths were 12 to 15 years of age. The modal age was 15 with a frequency of 17 youths. There were nine youths who were 16 or 17. These older youth were admitted in order to start the employment incentive component of the project as stated in the previous chapter. Of the nine youth, five were 17 and four were 16 years of age.

In project year two, the average age of the youth was 14.9

years. 60% of the youth were 12 to 15 years of age. In contrast to the first project year where 17% of the youth were 16 or older, in year two, 40% of the youth were 16 or older. The modal age was 16 with a frequency of 18 youth falling into that category.

In project year three, the mean age was 15.3 years. 52% of the youths were 12 to 15 years of age. 48% were 16 or older.

Table 7. Age Distribution of Youth Participants

AGE	12 - 15		16 +	
Year	f	%	f	%
1 (N=54)	45	83	9	17
2 (N=62)	37	60	25	40
3 (N=54)	28	52	26	48

Stability of Placement

In project year one, 65% of the youth remained in placement and experienced no moves. 28% experienced one move and four youths (7%) moved twice.

In year two, 68% of the youth remained in placement and experienced no moves. 21% experienced one move, 8% had two moves and 3% moved three times.

In year three, 74% percent remained in placement and experienced no moves. 17% experienced one move and 9% moved twice.

A cross sectional analysis of participants at three points (each project year) shows a rather consistent picture of placement

stability; ranging from 65% in year one to 74% in year three (See Table 8).

Longitudinally, however a somewhat disturbing picture surfaces. As the youths age (15 years plus) placement stability is at risk. Youth experiencing a year or two of mixed placements usually end up in a permanent group home placement, a return to their natural parents or they move to an independent living arrangement.

Table 8. Stability of Living Arrangements

	No Move		One Move		Two Move		Three Move	
Year	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1 (N=54)	35	65	15	28	4	7	0	0
2 (N=62)	42	68	13	21	5	8	2	3
3 (N=54)	40	74	9	17	5	9	0	0

School Stability

An analysis of the number of school changes occurring within project year one revealed that 92% of the youths attended only one school that year. It appears that changes in residential placement do not frequently precipitate a change in school placement. Changes in school placement are more likely to be contingent upon a shift from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school. Secondarily, school changes reflect a shift from regular school to a special education/vocational school or vice

versa as part of mainstreaming.

Pregnancy

In project year one, three (3) out of thirty (30) female participants carried a pregnancy to term after they enrolled in the project. In year two, two (2) out of thirty-four (34) female participants carried a pregnancy to term. In year three one (1) out of twenty-seven (27) female participants carried a pregnancy to term. Over the three year period, six (6) female participants carried a pregnancy to term after they were accepted into the program, representing thirteen (13%) percent of the female participants.

Arrests / Delinquency

In project year one, no participants were arrested. In year two, three participants were arrested, one on drug charges and two on other charges. In year three, one youth was arrested on drug charges and two on other charges. Over the three year period, six youths were arrested, representing seven (7%) percent of the total sample.

Nine Youth were known to have sold drugs. One of them was shot. Four girls dated young men who were drug pushers. The parents of four youth were convicted drug pushers and/or users.

Type of School Attended

The majority of project participants attended regular public school classes; thirty eight (70%) in year one, thirty-nine (64%)

in year two and thirty-four (62%) in year three. Six attended regular classes in private schools in year one, five in year two and four in year three.

A comparison of the numbers attending regular classes in either public or private schools with those in special education revealed that in year one 44 youths (81%) were in regular classes and 8 (15%) were in some type of special education program. In two cases the type of school attended was not determined. In year two, 44 (72%) were again in regular classes while 15 (25%) were in some type of special education and/or vocational program. In year three, 38 (69%) youths were in regular classes. Sixteen (29%) were in special education. In two cases the information on type of school was missing.

Given the project entrance criteria that youth not have an I.Q. below 85 and not be more than two grade levels behind their chronological age grade placement, it was a surprise to find such a high percentage of learning disabled among our project participants; 15% in year one, 25% in year two and 29% in year three.

Metropolitan Achievement Test Scores

In the second project year, the Metropolitan Achievement Test battery in the areas of reading and math was administered to 42 participants. It was found that 29 (69%) project youth were behind in reading by almost 4 years (3.8.), 31 (74%) youth were behind in math by 2.4 years. It appears that 66% of the participants

could be considered to have moderate to severe deficits in basic skills. This finding, similar to the finding on self-esteem and attitude toward school, (reported below), changed our definition of this population from one lacking in educational motivation to one circumscribed by deficits in basic reading and math skills. This definitional shift has major implications for the type of mentoring required to bring about grade improvement.

Part 111. Major Variables

Having described the sample on key dimensions in parts I and II, part III presents the data analysis for the project's key variables.

Self Esteem

Analysis of self-esteem is based on year one project participants. Baseline data is available on fifty of the fifty-four participants. The Battle Culture Free Self Esteem Inventory was administered in a group setting as part of an orientation to welcome youth to the project.

Form B of the inventory contains twenty-five items which assess self-esteem in four areas: general self-esteem (10 items), peer self-esteem (5 items), academic self-esteem (5 items) and parent-child self-esteem (5 items). From these subscales an overall self-esteem score can be calculated. On the parent-child subscale, items were duplicated to allow responses relative to

natural and/or foster parents.

According to the baseline data, participants entered the project with high self-esteem. Compared to the standardized norm on GENERAL SELF-ESTEEM, 4.0, project participants obtained a mean score of 7.58. Scores 8 and 9 each had eleven respondents, reflecting the modal response. On SOCIAL SELF-ESTEEM, respondents had a mean score of 4.0 compared to the standardized norm of 2.80. In the area of ACADEMIC SELF-ESTEEM, the mean for the group was 4.0 compared to the standardized mean of 3.29. Only on the subscale of PARENT-CHILD SELF-ESTEEM, did the project youth score lower than the standardized norm; 3.5 compared to 3.63.

Following a before/after design for year one, 22 youth were retested at the end of the year on the self-esteem inventory. Testing at Time 2 involved a smaller number, because sixteen (16) youths were not accessible. Seven of this group left the project and declined retesting; nine had been accessed in January and did not fit the criteria of having been in the project a full year. Sixteen (16) others, though in the project, were not present at the event where the second testing was done and/or declined to be retested when follow-up efforts were made.

Testing at Time 2 with this smaller sample revealed that the means on all the subscales remained essentially the same: GENERAL SELF ESTEEM, 7.68; SOCIAL SELF ESTEEM, 3.95; ACADEMIC SELF ESTEEM, 3.54 AND PARENT-CHILD SELF ESTEEM, 3.57. As expected, given the high scores on self-esteem at project entrance, a t Test utilizing self-esteem scores from Time 1 to Time 2.

Academic Self Esteem and Grade Changes

An analysis of the relationship between academic self-esteem scores at time one and grade performance during the first year, found high academic self-esteem to be present no matter the direction of grade changes. High academic self-esteem was present for those youths who showed positive grade changes all three grading periods from base; for those whose grade performance was mixed, sometimes up, sometimes down from base and astoundingly, it was high for those whose grade performance went consistently down from base.

Attitudes Towards School

Attached to the self-esteem inventory, were four questions to which the youths were asked to respond: Yes/No. The questions were: I expect to graduate. My teachers are friendly, I like school, My friends like school. 44 responses were available for analysis. 43 of the respondents stated that they expected to graduate from high school. 42 youths reported that they felt their teachers were friendly. 38 said that they liked school.

The group whose grade performance went consistently down from baseline (N=10) reported that they like school, that their teachers were friendly and that they expected to graduate.

These responses in combination with the self-esteem data suggest that the youths' poor grade achievement is due to factors other than low self-esteem or an adversarial student-teacher relationship. Only one finding was consistent with an original

assumption of the project i.e. 36 of the 44 respondents stated that their FRIENDS DID NOT LIKE SCHOOL.

Tutoring to Basics

Analysis of first year grade data showed no significant grade improvement for the group as a whole. This led to a modification in the tutoring approach used in the second year. In addition to the individual tutoring to subjects, a Saturday tutoring program aimed at improving basic skills in math and reading was initiated. Consistent with this modification and the presence of high self-esteem and expressed positive attitude toward school, evaluation shifted from a focus on self-esteem in the first year to assessment of basic math and reading skills in the second year.

As described in section two, baseline data on participants math and reading levels was obtained using the Metropolitan Achievement Test battery. Baseline data revealed that sixty-six (66%) percent of the participants had moderate to severe (i.e. two or more grade levels behind their chronological grade placement) deficits in math or reading or in both areas.

Saturday Tutoring

Attendance at the Saturday tutoring program was low and sporadic. Assessment of the effectiveness of the program is constrained by this, in combination with retest difficulties. Despite a very small subsample, (N=10) the data show a significant (.03) improvement in the MAT math scores T1 (Time 1) to T2 (Time

2) for those who attended the Saturday sessions more than 50% of the time. A comparable change in reading scores from T1 to T2 was not observed. No significant changes from T1 to T2 were noted for those who attended the Saturday sessions less than fifty percent of the time or for those who did not attend at all.

Grades

GPA'S for each grading period from Q2 (Quarter 2) through Q12 (Quarter 12) were analyzed for changes from the GPA'S obtained at baseline, Q1 (Quarter 1).

Given the phenomenon of project departures and replacements, quarter two reflects the highest frequency of cases (n=80) and quarter twelve, the lowest frequency (N=13). For each grading period following quarter two, a decreasing number of cases occur.

Grades showed improvement from baseline to Q2. Using the Sign Test, the improvement was significant at the .007 level.

Grade improvement was somewhat significant at the .09 level, when Q3 was compared to baseline. Significance was no longer picked up by the Sign Test at any other grading period, although close to 50% of youth continued to make improvements. This is perhaps a consequence of a decreasing N in the subsequent quarters.

Staying In School

During the project's first year (N=54) six (6) youths were not attending school. Of these six, one youth came into the project as a recent school dropout. Through mentorship, she began

a GED program. One youth dropped out of school for a period of time but through project efforts re-enrolled and attended classes. Four others, though enrolled in school, did not attend classes. Mentorship was not effective in changing this non-attendance pattern. 48 youth, 89% of the first year participants remained in school and attended classes. During the projects second year (N=62), 1 youth dropped out of school in May. 8 youths were enrolled but not attending classes. 53 youth, 85% of the second year population remained in school and attended classes.

During project year three, 4 youths were considered school dropouts; 3 officially dropped out of school, 1 was enrolled but not attending. Two of the dropouts joined the Job Corps. 50 youths, 92.5% of the third year participants, remained in school and attended classes.

Attendance

Project youth have significantly improved their school attendance since they entered the project. Homeroom attendance data was available in some cases as part of the youths' report card. while it is recognized that attendance at homeroom does not guarantee class attendance, it still remains the only data source for monitoring school attendance. Using the Sign test to compare attendance at Q2 with that at baseline (Q1), it was found that attendance had improved at the .01 level of significance. Attendance improvement persisted when Q3 was compared to base, showing significance at the .003 level. Similarly, attendance

remained improved when Q4 was compared to base. Significance was at the .002 level. All subsequent comparisons were not significant. As in the case of the grade data, this could be a function of a decreasing N over the three year period. The sign test was used because of its sensitivity in picking up any positive directional change. Though a student's attendance might be down from base, it could still be improved over the previous quarter. The Sign test can take this into account.

Part 1V

Peer Mentor and Youth Participant Evaluation of the Project

In project year three, feedback about what worked and did not work was sought from mentors and youth. The project asked both mentors and youth participants to define what they would consider to be legitimate outcomes for such a project. The following analysis is based on two survey questionnaires, given out at the end of the third year; one to mentors and one to youth participants.

Peer Mentor Survey

Expectation

Thirty-nine peer mentors involved in the project during year three were surveyed at the end of the year. Most mentors (88%) stated that they entered the project expecting it to be difficult.

Despite the difficulty involved, 24 of the mentors who answered stated that they found mentoring to be a satisfying experience.

Training and Supervision

Half of the peer mentors attended the training sessions offered in the third year 50% to 75% of the time; half of the mentors attended training 25% or less of the time. The majority (30 of 33) attended supervision more than 75% of the time. 17 said that they were VERY satisfied with the supervision, 11 reported that they were satisfied, and 5 indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied.

Time Spent by Mentor on the Project

Among the 39 mentors, most (74%) fulfilled the time requirement stipulated for mentoring. 16 mentors spent MUCH MORE time than was required. 10 reported that they spent less time than was required. Given the other components of the mentoring role, 18 mentors reported that they spent less than 50% of their time in actual one-on-one contact with their youth. 21 managed to spend 75-90% of their time in direct contact.

Type of Contacts

Thirty-one of the 39 mentors were in contact with foster parents by phone. 21 stated that they talked with the foster parents weekly or monthly. 17 mentors reported that they came into personal contact with foster parents weekly or monthly. Only 17

mentors had contact with the youth's social worker. 15 mentors were in touch by phone and 12 made personal contact.

All contacts involved a social dimension. Beyond that however, contacts with foster parents involved a serious / education focus in 25 cases and a serious / emotional component in 9 other cases. Contacts with social workers, though less frequent, involved serious issues related to education, foster home problems, emotional problems, and project participation. In 7 cases the contact was procedural.

Travel

Out of 35 responses to this question, 19 mentors reported that the youth traveled to the CUA campus 90% of the time for their tutoring. In 34 out of 39 responses, travel also included both mentor and youth meeting at a place independent of either the youth's home or the CUA campus. Very few mentors (ten or less) actually traveled to the youth's foster home on any consistent basis.

In terms of risk in traveling, 15 mentors stated that they felt a little at risk in travel, 12 said they felt it was a medium risk and 5 felt is was a high risk situation. Given responses other places in the survey, it appears that in combination with the perceived travel risk, lack of automobile and the probability of being stood-up once there, shaped the pattern of meeting location. The dominant pattern was for the youth to travel to the CUA campus; next came the choice of an independent location, usually downtown,

to which each traveled separately.

Thirty-seven of Thirty-eight respondents stated that they found travel to be difficult to almost impossible.

Mentor / Youth Relationship

Mentors, 35 of the 39 respondents, reported that the youth they worked with were either neutral or somewhat receptive to participating in the project when the youth and mentor first met. Only four mentors reported that their youth was resistent to project participation upon initial contact.

In trying to assess how deep the relationship went, mentors were asked how much they involved their youth in their life beyond the mentoring relationship. 13 said pretty much to very much; 26 said little to very little. When asked how much they involved themselves in their youth's life, 38 reported very little to not at all.

Friendship

Only 8 mentors classified their relationship with their youth as a friendship. 25 stated unequivocally that they were not able to establish a friendship. Six were neutral about classifying it. Interestingly, the same perception existed among the youth and shows up on their survey. 9 youth, of those surveyed, classified their relationship with their mentor as a friendship. 17 said a friendship did not exist and 4 declined to answer.

If not friendship, what is it?

Given other responses on both surveys, the relationship that existed between mentor and youth can best be classified as a working relationship. That the relationship was a working relationship rather than a friendship, does not devalue its meaning. In fact, other responses on both the mentor and youth survey substantiate that the mentor relationship was of value to both the mentor and the youth; but in different respects than friendship.

Tutoring Competency

In assessing competency as a tutor, only 9 stated that they felt confident in their tutoring abilities. 28 were neutral or said they did not feel confident. This response takes on another dimension juxtaposed to the finding of the percentage (66%) of youth found to have moderate to severe deficits in basic skills such as math and reading. 29 respondents felt that the youth could benefit from tutoring if better matching between mentor and youth occurred and tutoring efforts were informed by better assessment of the youth's needs.

Gains

When asked to state their perception of the academic gains their youth made as a result of being mentored, the mentors revealed the following:

Perceived Academic Improvement

Area	Yes	No
Study Habits	15	19
Grades	17	17

Twenty-five of 39 mentors felt that their youth acquired a view of him/herself as being more academically capable. 24 mentors stated that the youth extended his/her educational vision to include the possibility of college. 31 mentors felt their youth developed a more positive attitude toward school.

Area for Improvement in the Project

In an open ended question, mentors were asked what would make the project better. The top six responses were: 1) do not include youth who do not want to participate, 2) provide better training in the area of tutoring, 3) provide greater programming variety, 4) organize the program better, 5) screen both mentor and youth to do a better match on personality and ability/need. 6) facilitate better accessibility of mentor to youth; mentors need cars; assistance with transportation difficulties.

Major Assets of the Project

In a second open ended question, mentors were asked what they considered to be the major assets of the project. Their responses fell into three categories. In terms of project organization, they felt that the program activities and the project staff/supervision

were major assets. In relationship to themselves, the issue of stipend was least cited and when cited was lowest ranked. Mentors considered their own growth and their ability to act altruistically as a major asset to them. In terms of the youth, mentors stated that they felt the project had its major impact, not on improving grades but on instilling hope and conveying the message to never give up.

Mentor Satisfaction

Fifteen mentors reported that they found mentoring to be a satisfying experience. Six were neutral and eighteen felt mentoring was a less than satisfactory experience. When asked what they got out of mentoring, three major responses emerged. Thirty-one mentors claimed that they had positive feelings about being able to help another individual. Twenty-one cited their ability to establish a relationship. Twenty said they gained an understanding of Black teen culture among youths in foster care.

Youth Survey

Only 30 of the 54 youths in the project in year three completed the survey. Of those who did complete it, ten have been in the project all three years, seven have been in two years, four have been in one year and five have been in less than a full year.

Willingness to Participate

Consistent with the mentor survey, the majority of youths (22 of 29) report that they were interested in joining the project. Only 4 stated that they were reluctant to participate.

Number of Mentors

Of the 26 youth who answered this question, 9 reported that they had three or more mentors, 10 said they had two mentors and 7 said they had one mentor. Given the duration of the project and the mentor turnover this appears to be fairly accurate. What is significant, is that some youths were able to identify with the project and thus handle the change in mentors with relative ease.

Type of Contact / Location of Contact

Youth corroborated mentor report as to frequency of contact by phone, personal meeting and location i.e. traveling to CUA campus or meeting at a location to which each traveled. 24 youth stated they felt they could call their mentor anytime. In fact, 17 youth called at least once a week and 5 called twice a week.

Academic Help

Twenty-eight youth stated that the tutoring they received in regard to school work was helpful to them. Only 5 youths reported that little time with their mentor was actually spent on school work; 25 said half or more of the time was devoted to tutoring. Youths reported that they received tutoring help in math, reading,

history, social studies, science and spelling. Interestingly, of those surveyed in year three, 12 had attended the Saturday tutoring program offered in year two of the project.

Grade / Attendance Improvement

Nineteen of 28 respondents stated that having a mentor did improve their grades. 26 of 30 respondents said they improved their attendance; and 26 of 29 respondents said that having a mentor made them want to remain in school and graduate. The grade data for Q2 to base and the attendance data for Q2, Q3 and Q4 support the youths' responses in the survey.

Friendship / Tutoring

Consistent with that reported by the mentors, only 9 youth classified their relationship with a mentor as a friendship. 17 stated that no friendship existed. 4 declined to answer this question.

If not Friendship, What?

In question 25 on the youth survey, respondents were asked to check all items that characterized their relationship with their mentor.

Item checked	Number of persons checked
Mentor never gave up on me	21
Mentor helped with personal problem	10
Exposed me to college campus	12
Went place otherwise would not go	5
Learned about White culture	6
Mentor interest in my culture	7
Mentor spent money on me	17
Mentor helped me with school work	19
Mentor helped me with a teacher	9
Mentor told me things about him/herself	16
Mentor believed in me	17

Overwhelmingly, when the youths were asked to list three of the most important things about their relationship with their mentor, the two top responses were that the mentor believed in him/her and never gave up on him/her. The third listed was that the mentor helped with a personal problem.

Project Activities

In question 29 on the survey, participants were asked to evaluate in terms of like/dislike the various activities that they were involved in as part of the project. Most youth, checked all items. When asked to identify the three activities which were most important to them, they identified : their mentor (18), being

tutored (16), Camping trips (15) and awards ceremony (15).

Measuring Success of the Project

When asked to indicate, from a check list, what they considered to be a measure of the project's success, the youth identified the following:

I had a good relationship with my mentor	21
I improved my grades	17
I now think college may be a good idea for me	15
I had fun	15
I decided to stay in school and graduate	11
I feel better about myself	11
I improved in some subjects	11

Finally, when asked if they would recommend the project to others, 18 said yes, 6 said no, and 6 did not respond.

Limitations of the Research

The necessity of shifting from an experimental design to a single sample before/after design was a compromise. The phenomenon of project replacements also compromised the longitudinal nature of the project in that only thirteen youths participated all three years of the project. Nevertheless, the average length of stay in the project was approximately two years.

Youths were generally cooperative about testing on an

instrument when it was administered for the first time and less cooperative at retesting. The report is strong in providing a rather complete picture on baseline data and much weaker on the comparative analysis from T1 to T2. The latter is due to less cooperative behavior at retesting and departures. Though difficult, it was possible to gather report cards over the three year period with a minimal amount of missing data.

Being allowed to shift the testing focus as findings dictated was an asset. It led to a major insight regarding the educational status of this population. The results of the Self-Esteem and Attitude Toward School data in combination with the MAT testing, led us to change our view of this population. We found this group not to be lacking in self-esteem and educational motivation and expectations but rather that their education was being constrained by serious deficits in basic math and reading skills.

CHAPTER V. EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION PROFILE

From 1986 to 1989, 97 foster youths participated in the project. All were Black with the exception of one Asian and two Hispanics. 50 are female and 47 are male. Among the 97, 44 youths, 22 male and 22 female, 42 Black, 1 Asian and 1 Hispanic, turned age 16 and thus became eligible to participate in the employment training program.

Nineteen (43%) of the 44 youths did not participate. Twenty five (57%) of them were given employment interviews and all were offered jobs near their homes or at their preferred sites. However, among the 25 youths, 6 (24%) never started to work after being hired. Four youths (16%) worked a month or less; 6 (24%) worked one month to six months; 3 (12%) worked six months to a year; and 6 worked a year or more.

At least seven of the youths who worked six months or longer have since moved to sales or to better paid restaurant jobs, and three of them graduated from high school and pursued higher education. Their experiences with Marriott were cited as invaluable in terms of understanding the world of work, developing vocational skills, and changing attitudes toward work and education.

Three of the youth, who participated in the employment program, were behind in grade level because of excessive absenteeism and poor academic performance. Subsequently they dropped out of school. However, all have been full time employed and self sufficient since they left school. One of them has since

become a supervisor at one of the Roy Rogers Restaurants.

Table 9. Employment Duration

	Number of Youth		
Duration	Male	Female	%
0	5	1	24
1 month or less	3	1	16
1 month to 6 months	2	4	24
6 months to 1 year	2	1	12
1 year and over	0	13	24
Total	12	13	100

A close examination of the 29 youth who either chose not to seek employment with Marriott, who were unable to begin to work, or who worked one month or less found that 6 (21%) of the youths had other jobs, 2 (7%) youth wanted to give full attention to school. The remaining 21 (72%) youth were prevented from having a successful employment training experience because of five employment barriers which are outlined below.

Teen Pregnancy

The first barrier to employment for project youths was teen pregnancy. Five girls did not interview for jobs because they were pregnant or already had a child. One girl quit after working less than one month. Pregnancy was an added difficulty for foster youth

because while these youth were in care and had children, they frequently went through a series of placement changes between the pregnancy, the birth of the child, and the placement of mother and child. These changes made employment very difficult.

Underground Employment

There were two youth in the project who chose not interview for jobs and one youth who failed to begin work because they were involved in underground employment--selling drugs.

Documentation

The third barrier to employment for project youths was the documentation required for work. The new immigration law mandates that every worker must be able to document eligibility to work in the United States. The documentation required a youth to produce an original social security card and an original copy of birth certificate. Two project youths were unable to locate these for an extended period of time and employment was delayed for over three months. One of them subsequently lost interest in working. The documentation procedure was very frustrating for the youth and negatively affected their perception of employment. Some delays were attributed to the fact that it was not uncommon for foster children to have their names changed unofficially by family members and caretakers. Additionally, the children might have been born in different states. Tracking these documents was often a

complicated process.

Attitudes

The youths' attitudes about employment was the fourth barrier. Twelve (41%) youth did not want to work in the entry level positions in fast food restaurants even though they wanted jobs. They cited reasons such as not wanting to wash dishes or mop floors or get their hands dirty. In some cases, their foster parents and group home counselors shared the same negative view of fast food restaurant work.

Unrealistic expectations about employment was another barrier to employment. Many expected to be promoted to the managerial positions after working for only a month.

Educational and Vocational Skills

Limited education and vocational skills are often referred to as the greatest barriers to employment. This was also the case for the majority of youth in our project. As reported in the previous chapter, an independent testing of 42 project youth in spring 1988 found that 69% of the youth were on average functioning 3.8 grades behind in reading, and 74% were 2.4 grades behind in math. Two of the youth who worked a month or less were in special education class. Two of the three youths, who were selling drugs, were also in special education for the learning disabled. It was

very clear that skill deficits further hindered employment training especially for those who had attitudinal and/or other problems.

CHAPTER Vl. IMPLICATION

Based on project experiences and findings, it is safe to conclude that youth in foster care are at risk of dropping out of school. Indeed, educational neglect has been found as a major reason for many Black children being placed in foster homes. We have followed a thirteen year old girl discharged to her mother after she repeatedly ran away from foster homes. This single parent family had 12 female children. Although there was no evidence of overt physical or emotional abuse, all six girls over age 14 have dropped out of school. They either stayed home without employment, or began to have babies. In other cases, we found that two adolescent boys never went to school before they were placed in foster homes.

There is no guarantee that children will receive proper education after they enter the child welfare system. Many circumstances beyond their control cause disruptions in the children's education. School records (academic and immunization) frequently do not follow the child's foster home placement in a timely fashion in order for the child to be promptly enrolled in school. The inflexibility and unresponsiveness on the part of some school personnel and health clinic staff further compound the problem. For example, three girls were prohibited from attending school for more than six weeks in the middle of a semester because their immunizations were not up to date according to school records. The fact was that their health records were lost while

in placement. Afterwards, they were truant from school because they were so behind in the class. Although they were good students in the beginning of the year, two of the three girls failed promotion.

Several research studies show that dropouts tend to be characterized by poor academic performance. As a group, the project youth were significantly behind in basic educational skills, and their grades were very poor. Hospitalization, detention, court hearing, and subsequent removal from a placement resulted in emotional or conduct problems, and frequently caused extended absenteeism from school for the foster youth. Consequently, the youth that were behind academically, lost interest in school.

Chronic truancy will result in school dropout. Over the three project years, several youth enrolled in school but almost never attended. Three of them dropped out of school. One of them finally graduated at age of 20. This young man was an exceptional case because he was said to have an I. Q. of 160.

Teen pregnancy was another factor contributing to dropping out of school. Of the 11 girls who were referred to the project and had babies, two had dropped out of school before they entered the project.

The implication of these findings is that education should be a priority for children in substitute care if they are expected to achieve self-sufficiency. Their educational program should be monitored very closely by their primary caretakers and social

workers. In view of the fact that more than 66% of project youth have learning deficits and almost a quarter of them are in special education, early detection and intervention are imperative. Children in substitute care should be tested on a routine basis to determine the level of their educational function. If there is an area of educational deficit, timely assistance should be given to them before they develop a serious learning problem.

Minority youth in foster care, like their urban peers, are also at risk of becoming involved in illegal activities because of the ever-expanding drug trade in their neighborhoods and their own unwillingness to accept entry-level jobs which they perceive as demeaning. Nine youth were known to have sold drugs, several were arrested and one was shot.

The Keep Youth in School project has demonstrated that the peer mentors and employment training and incentive aspects of the program were effective ways of motivating youth to stay in school. The undergraduate college students, both Black and White, who served as peer mentors were found to be capable of serving as effective change agents. They could help the youth improve their grades and school attendance. They gave youth hope and confidence in themselves. They were care givers, tutors, as well as role models for urban minority youth. However, a referring agency's expectations for the mentors must be realistic considering the mentors' age, maturity, training and experience. They are not professional counselors or tutors.

The project also found that selection of peer mentors should

be based on the students' qualifications--academic performance, attitudes, values, interests, and the capacity to care for others--rather than financial need. On the other hand, the stipend provided by the project was essential for the college students to provide gifts, transportation and for doing things with the youth.

Although the Marriott corporation has made an immense contribution to the project, its participation was essentially limited to the fast food restaurants; differential and favorable considerations of project youth were not obtainable from any of its hotels. Therefore, linkage with employers in addition to fast-food restaurants should be established to provide youth with optional career paths and occupational mobility. More meaningful and acceptable employment opportunities may win some of the youth over from the drug pushers. Over the three project years, seven youth were known to have sold drugs.

The incentive program has expanded the youths' support system to include a network of other adolescents in foster care, thereby promoting mutual support and lessening the stigma attached to being in foster care. By including their friends and family members in project activities, relationships with significant persons in their lives were enhanced.

The project has completed a replicable model to help urban youth, aged 12 to 15, who are at risk of dropping out of school. It is important to note that the success of this project depended largely upon support from the collaborating agencies, as well as the dedication of primary caretakers to provide youth with the

fundamentals--supervision and a stable home environment. In a society that values education as the key to opportunity, it is essential there be efforts designed to support the nation's most disadvantaged youth in achieving all that they can, and equipping them with the necessary skills and education to become a successful generation.

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APPENDIX 1

KEEP YOUTH IN SCHOOL

PEER MENTOR'S APPLICATION FORM

Date: _____

1. Name: _____

2. Local Address: _____

_____ Phone: _____
Zip Code

3. Permanent Address: _____

_____ Phone: _____
Zip Code

4. Social Security Number: _____

5. Sex:
[ ] Male [ ] Female

6. School Status
[ ] Full Time [ ] Part Time

7. Class Status:

[ ] Freshman [ ] Senior
[ ] Sophomore [ ] 1st Year Graduate
[ ] Junior [ ] 2nd Year Graduate

8. Major:

[ ] Social Work [ ] Education
[ ] Psychology [ ] Other: _____

9. Advisor: _____ GPA _____

10. Department/School: _____

11. Do you have another job during the school year?

[ ] Yes (Please write the number of hours/week) _____ [ ] No

12. Please check other outside activities you are involved in:

[ ] Sports [ ] Theater/Drama
[ ] Campus Ministry [ ] Volunteer
[ ] Other (please specify): _____

13. Please check activities you would be interested in doing with the youths.

[ ] Attending sporting events (please specify) _____

_____

[ ] Participating in sports (please specify) _____

_____

[ ] Attending plays
[ ] Attending concerts
[ ] Trips to the museums
[ ] Trips to the movies
[ ] Other (please list): _____

_____

14. Academic Strengths: Please check the courses you would be able to tutor:

[† Math	[ ] History
[ ] English	[ ] Geography
[ ] General Science	[ ] Other: _____

15. How did you learn of the project?

[ ] Friend
[ ] Advertisement
[ ] Other: _____

16. Do you have access to a car? [ ] Yes [ ] No

APPENDIX 2

KEEP YOUTH IN SCHOOL

Educational Profile Form

Name of Student _____ Date _____

Birthdate _____ School _____ Grade _____

What kind of school placement is the student in? _____

_____

Reason for this placement? (i.e., LD, ED, MR, etc.)

_____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

Results: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What instructional level is the student taught at school? _____

Does the student have a current IEP? Yes _____ No _____

Is it available to our staff? _____

Educational Profile Form

What are the school's concerns for this student? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In what way can the peer mentor be helpful in relation to the school's concerns?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Any suggestions for tutoring this student? _____

_____

_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 3

KEEP YOUTH IN SCHOOL PROJECT

Selection Criteria

1. **Agency Auspice:**

   /__/ Family and Child Services of Washington, D. C.

   /__/ D. C. Department of Human Services

   /__/ Other _____

2. **Contact Person/Person Filling Out Form**

   Name: _____ Phone: _____

3. **Foster Child's Name:** _____

   Foster Parent/Group Home Counselor Name: _____

   Foster/Group Home Address: _____

   _____ Phone: _____

4. **Chronological Age: Date of Birth:** _____

/__/	12 by December 31, 1986	/__/	15
/__/	12	/__/	16
/__/	13	/__/	17 by December 31, 1986
/__/	14	/__/	17

5. **Grade Level:**

/__/	5th	/__/	9th
/__/	6th	/__/	10th
/__/	7th	/__/	11th
/__/	8th	/__/	Other _____

6. **Chronological Age and Grade Level:**

   /__/ Is at grade level for chronological age.
   /__/ Is 1 year behind grade level.
   /__/ Is 2 years behind grade level.
   /__/ Is more than 2 years behind grade level.
   /__/ Other (Please, explain) _____
   _____

Selection Criteria

7. Intelligence Quotient:

/__/ 85 or above
/__/ below 85
/__/ not known

When was I.Q. obtained? _____

Should child be reassessed? /__/ Yes /__/ No

8. Social Support:

/__/ Receiving intensive/extensive psychotherapy.

/__/ Receiving supportive counseling.

/__/ Receiving family therapy.

/__/ Other (Please, explain) _____

_____

_____

9. Eligibility:

Meets Criteria

/__/ Yes /__/ No

10. School _____ School District _____

11. Date Referral Form was Completed: _____

12. Is foster home accessible to public transportation (bus and/or subway):

Yes_____ No _____

APPENDIX 4

MENTOR SURVEY

PART I

Mentor Expectations

I expected mentoring to be:

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
challenging difficulty	a little difficult	no expectations	fairly easy	very easy

I found mentoring to be:

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
almost impossible	very difficult	less than satisfying	satisfying	very satisfying

What did you get out of being a mentor: Rank order your answers using 1 to indicate the most beneficial aspects of mentoring for you.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

What are the major problems with the project which need to be addressed if we were to recommend that other schools adopt such a project. Rank order your answer using 1 to indicate the problem most in need of being addressed.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

Other comments:

Part I
2

What are the major assets of this project. Rank order your response using 1 to indicate the best asset.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

If this youth stayed in the project why do you think he/she stayed? Short answer.

If this youth left the project, why do you think he/she left? Short answer.

Of all the things you've heard this youth say while participating in the project, which comments did you consider the most significant?

Excluding not dropping out of school and grade improvement, what would you regard as a legitimate indication of project success.

Part I
3

Please place an X in the parenthesis next to the number which best reflects your attendance at and satisfaction with training, supervision.

Year Three - 1988-89

Attendance at training

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
1 or 2 sessions	25%	50%	75%	100%

Satisfaction with training

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
very dissatisfied	a little dissatisfied	satisfied	fairly well satisfied	very satisfied

Attendance at supervision

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
1 or 2 sessions	25%	50%	75%	100%

Satisfaction with supervision

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
very dissatisfied	a little dissatisfied	satisfied	fairly well satisfied	very satisfied

Year Two - 1987-89 Answer if applicable

Attendance at training

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
1 or 2 sessions	25%	50%	75%	100%

Satisfaction with training

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
very dissatisfied	a little dissatisfied	satisfied	fairly well satisfied	very satisfied

Attendance at supervision

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
1 or 2 sessions	25%	50%	75%	100%

Satisfaction with supervision

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
very dissatisfied	a little dissatisfied	satisfied	fairly well satisfied	very satisfied

Other Comments:

PART II

Directions: On the following scale items, place an X in the parenthesis next to the number which best reflects your answer.

Time

1. I spent the amount of time required of me by the project in project activities (includes meeting with youth(s), attending training and supervision).

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
much less than required	less than required	as required	more than required	much more than required

2. Given the other demands (training, supervision) of the project on my time, I spent approximately ____ percent of my time in face to face contact with this youth.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
10%	25%	50%	75%	100%

*Note: amount of time is low because youth didn't keep scheduled appointments ( ).

Activities

3. As part of my work with this youth I was in contact with the youth's foster parents. Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, answer the following:

My contact was by phone:

Weekly ( ) BiMonthly ( ) Monthly ( )

Other: ( ) _____

My contact was in person:

N/A ( ) Weekly ( ) BiMonthly ( ) Monthly ( )

Other: ( ) _____

I used both forms of contact, phone and in person. ( )

Part II
5

In the item below, **CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.** If more than one answer applies, rank order those checked by placing a 1 next to the response which is most representative ;of the nature of contact. (2 for next most representative reason for contact)

The nature of my contact was:

( ) Social, i.e. greeting them in the course of contacting and meeting my youth.
( ) Social, i.e. taking part in their family/church activities.
( ) Serious/education, i.e. discussing with them the youths school attendance, school performance, intention to drop out of school.
( ) Serious/educational-behavioral, i.e. discussing with them problems about running away, suicide, pregnancy.

4. As part of my work with this youth, I was in contact with the youth's social worker. Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, answer the following questions:

My contact was by phone:

( ) as needed ( ) monthly ( ) quarterly

( ) other _____

The nature of my contact was:

( ) Procedural, i.e. greeting her/him as part of accessing the youth into the project.
( ) Serious/educational, i.e. discussing attendance, school performance problems, intent to drop out of school.
( ) Serious/foster home problems, i.e. intent to run away, complaints about living conditions.
( ) Serious/project participation, i.e. failure to keep appointments, intent to drop out of project.
( ) Serious/emotional, i.e. drug problems, suicide intent, pregnancy.

( ) Other _____

Part II
6

Travel

All of the following scales ask that you estimate the percent(%) of time.

5. In meeting with this youth, what pattern of meeting occurred?
( ) Youth traveled to meet mentor on CUA campus.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
10%	25%	50%	75%	90%

( ) Mentor traveled to meet youth at youths foster home or school.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
10%	25%	50%	75%	90%

( ) Both mentor and youth traveled to places independent of CUA campus/foster home.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
10%	25%	50%	75%	90%

6. How would you rate the <u>safety</u> factors involved in travel to meet your youth.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
very high	high risk	medium risk	little risk	no problem

7. How would you rate the ease of travel in meeting your youth.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )

8. When you traveled to meet your youth did you consider this to be:
( ) project time ( ) personal time

Relationship

9. How would you rate the willingness of this youth to participate in this program?

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
very resistent	somewhat resistent	neutral	somewhat receptive	very receptive

10. How much have you involved this youth in other aspects of your life, i.e. meeting your family, staying overnight at your dorm/apartment, etc.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
not at all	very little	a little	pretty much	very much

Part II
7

11. How much have you involved yourself in other aspects of your youth's life, i.e. attending black community events, church services, being invited to dinner at the youth's residence.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
not at all	very little	a little	pretty much	very much

12. It has been suggested that racial and socio-economic differences would present a major barrier to the successful operation of this project. Did you find this to be the case with this youth? Comment:

Friendship and Tutoring

What has been special about this project has been the attempt to combine both tutoring and friendship under the umbrella of mentoring. Though it is often difficult to separate tutoring and friendship, it is important for us to look at this dimension. Please five it your best effort. Place an X in the parenthesis next to the number which best reflects your answer.

13. On the tutoring/friendship dimension, I did:

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
mostly tutoring	more tutoring than friendship	equal	more friendship than tutoring	mostly friend

14. Having worked in this project, I now think mentorship ought to:

( ) focus only on tutoring
( ) focus only on friendship
( ) keep a dual focus

15. I felt competent as a tutor:

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

16. I felt that my youth could not benefit from the type of tutoring that this project offers. She/he needed more.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

17. I felt I was able to establish a very good friendship with this youth.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

Part II
8

18. In contrast to friendship, I thought this youth needed more of a disciplinarian approach.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

19. I felt this youth ;made academic gains in the following areas:

improved study habits	( ) yes	( ) no
improved grades	( ) yes	( ) no
improved attendance	( ) yes	( ) no
improved in all subjects	( ) yes	( ) no
improved in some subjects	( ) yes	( ) no

20. I felt being in this project, changed this youth's view of him/herself as being more academically capable.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

21. I felt being in this project made this youth consider college education for him/herself.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

22. I felt being in this project made this youth develop a more positive attitude toward school.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

23. I found mentoring this youth to be very satisfying.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

24. I found mentoring this youth to be very difficult.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

25. I felt that the employment component of this project truly served as an incentive to keep my youth in school and improve his/her grades.

1( )	2( )	3( )	4( )	5( )
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

Knowledge of Youth

26. To your knowledge, was your youth receiving any extra educational services?

( ) yes ( ) no

If yes, please check all that apply in the following series of questions.

( ) special education classes in regular school
( ) attending special education school
( ) had a professional tutor
( ) was half day regular school/half day vocational school
( ) other _____

27. To your knowledge, was your youth's academic performance complicated by other problems such as:

( ) being arrested
( ) engaging in illegal activities
( ) being truant from school
( ) being hospitalized for attempted suicide-emotional behavior
( ) being in abscondence
( ) being placed in residential treatment
( ) being pregnant
( ) being a team parent
( ) other _____

28. To your knowledge, did you youth excel in any other areas of interest.

( ) sports _____
( ) music _____
( ) work _____
( ) other _____

APPENDIX 5

YOUTH SURVEY

Hi! We are interested in learning what it was like for you to be in this project and have a peer mentor. To help us make the project better it is important for us to know what worked and did not work for you. Your answers will be kept confidential. Your mentor has filled out a similar form. We know some things need to be changed and some things need to be kept the same. You can help us decide what to do by answering the following questions. Thank you!

Circle the response that was true for you.

Participation in the Project

1. How willing were you to be in the project when you first entered?

   a. I did not want to be in the project
   b. I was a little bit reluctant
   c. I didn't care one way or the other
   d. I was somewhat interested
   e. I was very interested

2. During your project participation how did you feel about being int he project?

   a. I never wanted to be in it
   b. I didn't care one way or the other
   c. Sometimes I liked it, sometimes I didn't
   d. I liked it most of the time
   e. I really liked it

3. Who wanted you to be in the project?

   a. my foster parent
   b. my social worker
   c. both my social worker and my foster parents

4. How long were you with the project?

   a. I was in the project one year
   b. I was in the project two years
   c. I was in the project three years
   d. I was in the project less than one year

Mentorship

5. My favorite mentor was: _____

6. I had ____ number of mentors.

   a. I had one mentor
   b. I had two mentors
   c. I had three mentors
   d. I had more than three mentors

7. Sometimes mentors were "stood up" by their youth. Which of the following is true for you?

a. I never stood up my mentor
b. I did not meet with my mentor a few times
c. I met with my mentor at least 50% of the time
d. I avoided meeting with my mentor

8. If you circled 3 or 4 above, the main reason for not meeting your mentor was:

a. I didn't like my mentor
b. I didn't want to be in the project
c. I had a chance to be with my natural family
d. Other _____

Type of Contact

9. My mentor phone me:

a. once a week
b. twice a month
c. once a month
d. hardly at all
e. never

10. I felt I could call my mentor anytime if I had a problem. Yes No

11. I phone my mentor:

a. once a week
b. twice a week
c. once a month
d. hardly at all
e. never

12. I saw my mentor

a. twice a week
b. once a week
c. every other week
d. once a month
e. other _____

13. When my mentor and I met, we usually met by:

a. The mentor traveling to my house
b. I traveled to the CUA campus
c. We each traveled part way and met someplace else
d. We me 50% at my house and 50% at the CUA campus

Social Work

14. Part of the mentor program was to help you with school work. Was this part of the project helpful for you? Yes No

15. If no, why not?

_____

_____

16. How much of the time that you and your mentor spent together was time spent helping you with your school work?

a. most of the time
b. half of the time
c. a little of the time
d. none of the time

17. My mentor helped me with the following subjects: **(Circle all that apply)**

a. math
b. reading
c. spelling
d. social studies
e. history
f. other _____

18. Did you attend the Saturday tutoring program, during year two of the project? Yes No

19. If yes, did you find it:

a. helpful
b. more fun time than work time
c. a waste of time

20. Do you think that having a mentor helped you improve your grades?

a. Yes
b. No

21. Do you think having a mentor improved your school attendance?

a. Yes
b. No

22. Do you think having a mentor made you want to stay in school and graduate?

a. Yes
b. No

Friendship

Friendship between mentors and youths was an important part of the project.

23. My mentor and I

a. were very good friends
b. were a little bit friendly
c. were not able to hit if off

24. If you had more than one mentor, tell us which mentor you liked best and why

_____

_____

25. Friendship means different things to different people. If you considered your mentor to be a friend, what was it that made him/her a friend? **(Circle all that apply)**

a. my mentor didn't give up on me
b. my mentor helped me out when I had a personal problem
c. my mentor showed me how college was
d. my mentor took me places, I couldn't otherwise have gone
e. my mentor showed me White culture
f. my mentor was really interested in my culture
g. my mentor spent his/her own money on me
h. my mentor helped me with my school work
i. my mentor helped me with a teacher
j. my mentor told me things about him/herself
k. my mentor believed in me
l. my mentor _____

_____

26. Of all the things you circled above, which three (3) were the most important to your friendship?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

27. When you and your mentor were not doing school work, what kind of activities did you do together? Circle all that you did.

a. ate together at my foster home
b. ate at CUA campus
c. ate other places
d. went to the movies
e. went to project award ceremonies/events
f. went to Black History/Black Cultural events
g. stayed overnight at my mentor's dorm/place
h. went camping overnight
i. attended mentor's classes
j. went shopping
k. went to museums/art galleries
l. went to concerts

28. If you had to choose, which of the following would you say was best for you?

a. the help I got with school work
b. the friendship I made
c. both were equally important
d. other _____

_____

29. Of all the things the project did, what things did you like. Circle all that you liked.

a. my mentor
b. project activities
c. camping trips
d. project staff
e. awards ceremony
f. project newsletter
g. making friends with mentors other than my own
h. making friends with the other kids in the project
i. getting a job
j. being tutored
k. other _____

30. Of all the things you circled above, which three (3) were the most important to you as a project participant?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Work

Part of the project was the opportunity, if 16, to get a part time/summer job with Marriott (Roys; Big Boys).

31. Did you turn 16 while you were in the project?
    a. Yes
    b. No

32. Did you know that anyone who was 16 could get a part-time/summer job?
    a. Yes
    b. No

33. If you were 16, did you get a job through the project?
    a. Yes
    b. No

34. If not, why not?

    a. I didn't want any job
    b. I didn't want a fast food job
    c. I already had a job

35. Was the opportunity for a part-time/summer job in a fast food place a good incentive to keep you in school?
    a. Yes
    b. No

36. If not, why not?

    _____

    _____

37. What would have been better?

    _____

    _____

38. With your experience in this project, would you recommend this project to other Black youth?
    a. Yes
    b. No

39. If yes, why?

40. If no, why?

41. Was your last mentor?

a. White
b. Black
c. Hispanic
d. Asian

42. Was your mentor/

a. male
b. female

43. Describe your ideal mentor by race, gender, age, personality.

44. Why did you stay in this project?

45. How would you measure the success of this project for you?

a. I improved my grades
b. I improved in some subjects
c. I improved in school attendance
d. I had a good relationship with my mentor
e. I now think college might be a good idea for me
f. I had fun
g. I feel better about myself
h. I decided to stay in school and graduate
i. nothing changed for me as a result of being in this project
j. Other_____

_____